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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Cardinal Richelieu and the Development of the Royal French Marine of Louis XIII, 1624-1642

BY

Alan MacKenzie James

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of the Arts.

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 1992

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ABSTRACT

At the time of Cardinal Richelieu's nomination to the Council of Louis XIII in 1624, the French marine was disorganized and ineffective. Richelieu's early political battles with powerful enemies inspired a passion to unite and enhance French maritime authority under his control as the new Grand-Master, Chief and Superintendent-General of Commerce and Navigation. Throughout his ministerial career, he worked to build the military effectiveness of the marine in order to pursue naval victories against foreign powers for which he could credit his authority.

Concerns with commercial reform or colonization were ancillary to his greater passion to build his position with respect to the King, upon whom his political fortunes rested. The defeat of the invading English forces at the island of Ré in 1627 provided such an opportunity, but could not satisfy his naval ambition. Therefore, he turned to the dramatic siege of La Rochelle in 1628. Of course, war with Spain (1635) was the greatest of all challenges. The failure to capture the Spanish port of Fuenterrabia marks the failure of an almost boundless ambition. Yet in the process of building the navy, Richelieu enhanced greatly French sea power and defined for himself an unprecedented maritime authority.

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INTRODUCTION

At an Assembly of Notables in 1626-1627, Cardinal Richelieu declared: "It has been up to now a great shame that the King, who is senior among Christian kings, is in sea power, inferior even to minor princes."[1] Indeed, when Richelieu joined the Council of Louis XIII in 1624, French subjects were at the mercy of marauding pirates and commercial encroachments by foreign states, and the Crown owned no warships on the Atlantic and only a handful of dilapidated galleys in the Mediterranean. The Admiralty of France was only one office within a disparate collection of overlapping and confused feudal jurisdictions. The Admiralty had splintered among many office-holders who had honorific titles and competed for the revenue of policing merchant activity. In effect, that was all there was that could be called the French marine.

Generally, Richelieu's efforts to enforce royal authority required order and obedience from the established institutions of the state.[2] Yet he concerned himself particularly with maritime affairs. The Admiralty was the only major office which he suppressed and then redefined.[3] In its place he was named Grand-Master, Chief and

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[1] "Mémoire touchant la marine, envoyé à M. le Garde des Sceaux le 18 novembre 1626," Collection de documents inédits sur l'histoire de France, M. Avenel, ed., Lettres instructions diplomatiques et papiers d'état du cardinal de Richelieu (Paris: Imprimerie Imperiale, 1883; reprint, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International,1966), 2:290-291.

[2] Georges Pagès, La monarchie d'ancien régime: de Henri IV à Louis XIV (Paris: Colin, 1952), 110.

[3] In January 1627 the Constabulary also was suppressed, although nothing similar was introduced with which to replace it until the reign of Louis XIV.

Superintendent General of Navigation and Commerce in 1626, a position that he made increasingly powerful. Acting in this capacity at the Assembly of Notables, he presented a programme for the financial reform of the realm which involved for the first time the permanent maintenance of royal ships, the streamlining of finances and the creation of large, chartered mercantile companies for commerce and colonization.

One of the first naval challenges that he had to meet was the English invasion at the west-coast island of Ré in 1627. From available shipping, he pieced together a fleet to repel the invading forces and then to supplement the famous royal siege of the rebellious Huguenot stronghold of La Rochelle in 1628. Yet his determination to build a formidable French presence on the sea required the creation almost *ex nihilo* of a naval infrastructure. He dredged and fortified the harbours of Le Havre, Brest, Brouage and Toulon (as well as some other smaller ports); he established cannon foundries; and by 1639 he had a royal shipyard in operation on the island of Indret at the mouth of the Loire. By 1635, the year of formal entry into the Thirty Years' War against Spain, France had a combined fleet of forty-six warships at her disposal. The pride of the fleet was the magnificent, 2000 ton warship *La Couronne*. Most French warships were Dutch-built, but after ten years of construction at a private shipyard at La Roche-Bernard in Brittany, the vessel was launched in 1638 as a powerful symbol of France's emergence as a major maritime power.[4]

In the course of the war, the new French navy was able not only to force invading Spanish forces from the Lérins islands in the Mediterranean Bay of Cannes but also to disrupt significantly Spanish naval forces generally and ultimately to assist in the acquisition of the south-west province of Roussillon to France. Although French naval victories did not establish unqualified military supremacy, the very presence of a fleet capable of engaging Spanish forces is witness to a considerable achievement and an extraordinary maritime initiative.

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[4] "État des vaisseaux dont sera composée l'armée navale du Roi sur l'océan, en 1636," M. Eugène Sue, ed., Correspondance de Henri d'Escoubleau de Sourdis (Paris: De Crapelet, 1839; reprint, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International,1965), 1:36-37.

In 1643 a chaplain in the navy, the Jesuit Father Georges Fournier, dedicated to Louis XIII an encyclopedic work on navigation and the sea.[5] In his dedicatory preface, he offered reflections on the recent accomplishments of the French marine. Previously, he claimed, navigation had been ignored by the kings of France, resulting in a crippling disintegration of authority. Now all coastal towns and harbours were in complete obedience and every vessel sailed under the King's authority. Especially praiseworthy were the recent military victories against the House of Hapsburg, which marked the coming of age of the French navy. All was in place for the pursuit of future glory by the dauphin.

> [The] disorders have been known by many; [but] none has been able to remedy [them] as Your Majesty has, who re-united into one this dispersed power and authority, recalled all these streams to their source, brought all rays to the point of radiance and subordinated all members to their head.

Louis' instrument in the consolidation of maritime authority and the pursuit of glory had been Cardinal Richelieu. Accordingly, Fournier's assessment of the minister was no less fawning. Richelieu had approached the task of building a maritime power with such "ardour and prudence...that in four years [1627-1631] we have seen more vessels built and more harbours dredged and fortified than has been seen in eighty years."[6] This strength, "no less useful for commerce, than it is for war,"[7] brought such "order" to the marine that England and Spain not only had been repelled forcefully but were witness to victories in both seas equal to the glory of France's continental victories.[8]

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[5] Père Georges Fournier, Hydrographie contenant la théorie et la pratique de toutes les parties de la navigation (Paris: Soly, 1643, text-microfiche).

Fournier's reflection on the marine, published just months after Richelieu's death in December 1642, was an obsequious panegyric to the efforts of the central government. He was not attempting a critical political analysis. On the contrary, he was repeating prudently an account that would appeal to Richelieu, for the powerful Cardinal actively influenced contemporary opinion by encouraging historical accounts of the period that stressed his selfless efforts to strengthen the Crown.[9]

Richelieu's own writings, which are fundamental to a study of any aspect of his career, are similarly slanted. In both his *Testament politique* and his memoirs, Richelieu consciously and deliberately manipulated the text for the enhancement of his reputation as the guiding genius of rising absolutism. In the opening passages of the *Testament politique*, an attempted encapsulation of all of his political principles, Richelieu reflected on his own career:

> When it was first Your Majesty's pleasure to give me a part to play in the management of your affairs...I promised...to employ all my industry

---

[6] Fournier, Hydrographie, 345.

[7] Fournier, Hydrographie, "Dedication."

[8] Fournier, Hydrographie, 398.

[9] William F. Church, Richelieu and Reason of State (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972), 461-471.

> and all the authority which it should please You to give me to ruin the Huguenot party, to abase the pride of the nobles and to restore Your reputation among foreign nations to the station it ought to occupy.[10]

In other words, it was important to Richelieu to be seen as having come to the Council with clear objectives in mind and singularly devoted to the enhancement of royal authority, and as having throughout his career dealt systematically with each of the major concerns of the Crown.

Yet the *Testament politique* poses many further historiographical problems. Because its manuscript history is unclear, its first published appearance in Amsterdam in 1688 sparked a long-standing debate about its authenticity.[11] Now it is accepted generally that the piece was not entirely the work of Richelieu. Rather, it was the work of a team of secretaries who compiled it from the Cardinal's many papers. Despite convincing evidence that for some parts of the work the Cardinal had no personal influence whatsoever[12] most historians consider it reliable and representative of Richelieu's thought.[13]

Believing the *Testament* to be authentic, Louis André published another French edition in 1947. For this he based his work entirely on the least complete and polished of seventeen manuscripts of which he was aware (an odd decision since the Cardinal's guiding hand in the production was being presumed). In 1961 Henry Bertram Hill published an English translation which he claimed to be authentic because it was based entirely on the 1947 edition.[14] Any "scholarly lapses" in André's work, he claimed, need only concern "those specializing professionally in textual criticism."

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[10] Cardinal Richelieu, The Political Testament of Cardinal Richelieu: The Significant Chapters and Supporting Selections. Translated by Henry Bertram Hill (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), 3, 11.

[11] Other editions have appeared in France (1764 and 1929), in Spain (1694), in England (1695) and in Germany (1926).

[12] Esmond Esmonin, Études sur la France des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1964), 221-227.

[13] Church, Reason of State, 482.

Unfortunately the matter is not so simple. Hill's decision to edit out anything on economics because it is not "interesting" and because he questioned Richelieu's "competence to speak informatively" is questionable.[15] His decision to edit out anything dealing with the navy or the sea because "it is filled with minute and unimportant details"[16] is incomprehensible. In this case, the fragment which summarizes Richelieu's reflections on the sea can be found among his letters,[17] and the manuscript is even in his own handwriting. For this reason it must not only be considered representative but authentic in every sense of the word.[18] What makes its omission especially irresponsible is its apparent contradiction to the developing theme of Reason of State throughout the *Testament* as seen in the 1695 English translation:

> The Sea is, of all Heritages, that in which Soveraigns pretend to have the greatest share, and yet it is that upon which the Rights of everybody

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[14] Hill, Political Testament, xv.

[15] George A. Rothrock, "Book Reviews: The Political Testament of Cardinal Richelieu," The Historian (February 1962), 227.

[16] Hill, Political Testament, xvi.

[17] "De la nécessité d'avoir des vaisseaux, leur utilité et les advantages particuliers que la France a pour cela. [1628]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:177.

[18] Elizabeth Wirth Marvick, The Young Richelieu: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Leadership (Chicago and London: the University of Chicago Press, 1983), 24.

> are least agreed upon....In a word, the old Titles of that Dominion are Force and not Reason. One must be strong to claim this heritage.[19]

The assumptions and liberties taken by the translator of the standard English edition of the *Testament* deny the possibility of any anomalies in Richelieu's political thought. This invites a re-assessment of aspects of his career that may have been misunderstood, especially on the basis of similar assumptions concerning commercial reform and naval development. Moreover, the differences among the various translations evidence an uneven understanding of seventeenth-century sensibilities and require a critical defence against the unquestioned acceptance of even some of the most fundamental theories and perspectives in the *Testament politique*.[20]

Like the *Testament*, Richelieu's memoirs also require caution. This similarly influential work was edited and compiled by the same people and from the same source material, and a similar debate has raged about its authenticity.[21] Only by 1764 was a manuscript found; this was finally published in 1823 by Petitot in his *Mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France*.[22] It reappeared in 1837 in the collection of memoirs by Michaud and Poujoulat.[23] Finally, in 1907 the *Société de l'histoire de France* provided an annotated edition[24] that gives brief historical background and comments on evidence of the Cardinal's involvement in the composition of various sections. Moreover, it was based on manuscript sources unavailable to the editors of the earlier editions. For this, it is generally considered the most useful edition,[25] although it still requires particularly critical reading. Also like the *Testament,* the memoirs are a subjective presentation of a favourable image of Richelieu.

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[19] Richelieu, Armand Jean du Plessis, Cardinal, The Political Will and Testament of that Great Minister of State Duke de Richelieu: from whence Lewis XIV, the Present French King has taken his Measures and Maxims of Government (London: the Booksellers of London and Westminster, 1695; microfilm, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International), 80.

[20] The complete 1695 English translation compares more favourably than André's and Hill's with the first French edition from 1688. Armand Du Plessis. Cardinal Duc de Richelieu, Testament Politique, 4th ed. (Amsterdam: Desbordes, 1690).

[21] Esmonin, Études, 225.

[22] P. Bertrand, "Les vrais et les faux mémoires," Revue historique 141 (1922): 52-53.

The establishment of the navy by Richelieu required a re-definition of the traditionally fragmented maritime authority and its centralization under the Crown. This allowed the pursuit of military victory against the Huguenots of La Rochelle and England and later against the Spanish and Austrian House of Hapsburg. Thus, it fit perfectly the pattern he established in the *Testament* of the tireless engineer of growing royal authority with a broad and complete threefold programme for the realm: to break the Huguenots, to enforce obedience and to extend the boundaries of France. Accordingly, he used reflections on his maritime career in his memoirs to enhance further his own portrait in the *Testament politique.*

Although military victories against Spain on the sea were the greatest successes of his maritime programme, Richelieu was careful to insist in his memoirs that his intentions were broader. He claimed that the Grand-Mastership

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[23] "Mémoires du cardinal de Richelieu sur le règne de Louis XIII, depuis 1610 jusqu'à 1638," Nouvelle collection de mémoires relatifs à l'histoire de France depuis le XIIIe siècle jusqu'à le fin du XVIIIe siècle, Michaud and Poujoulat, eds., vols. 21-23, (Paris: Didier, 1854).

[24] Mémoires du cardinal de Richelieu, Robert Lavollée, ed., 10 vols. (Paris: Champion, 1925).

[25] R. Lavollée, Revue historique 142 (1928): 229-232.

> had all the same powers as had had the Admiral, except which was prejudicial to the service [of the King], which is that he was no longer commander of naval forces, as had been the Admiral; the King could henceforth grant the command to whomever he pleased, and all the associated offices now profited His Majesty.[26]

In this way, Richelieu was suggesting that he had not attempted any dangerous innovations in order to disguise what was perhaps the only major achievement of his maritime career: the carefully nurtured development of his military naval authority under the Crown. For not only did he acquire the theoretical military authority of the Admiral of France, but throughout his career he sought consistently to elevate it, even to the point of open competition with the King!

According to his memoirs, however, Richelieu encouraged the suppression of the Admiralty because it gave dangerous power and independence to a subject and because it brought "an unmanageable confusion to the finances of the King."[27] To replace the Admiral, Richelieu was named Grand-Master, a position from which he received no personal financial remuneration. Moreover he offered a programme designed to enrich France and restore her ancient splendour. Like her neighbours, France would establish great commercial companies to be protected by a fleet of royal warships. In other words, Richelieu was dedicated to the "re-establishment of commerce and to making the King powerful at sea."[28]

Such retrospective claims must come under rigorous scrutiny. Fortunately for serious students, Richelieu's political correspondence, in which he made no effort to disguise his intentions for posterity, is available and can be used for a reassessment of his maritime career. In 1853 the *Société de l'histoire de la France* published the first volume of the eight-volume collection *Lettres, instructions diplomatiques et papiers d'état du cardinal de Richelieu*, by Louis-Martial Avenel. Much more recently (1975-1982) another such collection was undertaken by Pierre Grillon.[29] In his *Les papiers de Richelieu*, Grillon included sources that had been unavailable to Avenel and relevant documents not directly attributable to the Cardinal. For instance, he included the charters of companies which, strictly speaking, were not from Richelieu's pen nor even necessarily dictated by him. But because of his intimate involvement in the foundation of mercantile companies, they represent important developments in his career.

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[26] Lavollée, Mémoires de Richelieu, 6:298, n. 5.

[27] Lavollée, Mémoires de Richelieu, 6:296.

[28] Lavollée, Mémoires de Richelieu, 7:31.

Unfortunately, Grillon's work has been left unfinished due to a lack of funding. There are only five volumes of the sub-category *Section politique intérieure correspondance et papiers d'état*, which cover the years 1624-1630, plus one other volume (edited by Adolf Wild) sub-categorized *Section politique extérieure* with particular reference to the Holy Roman Empire for the years 1616-1629. Thus, Avenel's work and Grillon's work must be considered together, for despite their individual shortcomings they make a reasonably complete collection of Richelieu's papers.

Nevertheless, Richelieu's historiographic treatment has been dominated by the legacy he created in the *Testament*

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[29] Les papiers de Richelieu: section politique intérieure correspondance et papiers d'état, Pierre Grillon, ed. (Paris: Pedone, 1975).

politique and his memoirs.[30] Assessments of his maritime career inevitably emphasize his "vision" and often the foreign policy advances that resulted, such as those of the nineteenth-century historian Chabaud-Arnault, who praises Richelieu almost exclusively for his successful military campaigns.[31] Léon Guérin offers the standard nineteenth-century portrayal of a man of extraordinary genius, who conceived the value of sea power and the plan by which France could attain it. And, as Richelieu himself suggested, throughout his ministry he developed the marine in an ordered fashion, defeated the Huguenots and then, with remarkable success, challenged mighty Spain.[32]

In *La marine militaire de la France* (1911), La Cour-Gayet also takes at face value Richelieu's own account. He praises Richelieu's ability to bring "order" to the marine and to deal systematically and vigorously with impediments to the establishment of his "very clear vision" of France's maritime role in the world.[33] Richelieu's military successes were a result of his sense of France's destiny and his unique understanding of sea power. Even in more recent studies Richelieu's historiographic legacy remains intact.

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[30] Elizabeth Marvick offers an interesting treatment of the Cardinal in her psychoanalytic analysis that is free of the burden of historiographic preconceptions but which concentrates on his early life and unfortunately offers too little to the student of his politics of the sea later in his career. Marvick, Young Richelieu.

[31] Ch. Chabaud-Arnault, "Études historiques sur la marine militaire de France: Les flottes de Louis XIII," Revue maritime et des colonies 90 (1886), 243-280, 373-410; Drayperon, "Le sens géographique du cardinal de Richelieu," Revue de géographie 17 (1885), 274-288.

[32] Léon Guérin, Histoire maritime de France (Paris: Andrieux, 1844), 259-263.

[33] G. Lacour-Gayet, La Marine militaire de la France sous les règnes de Louis XIII et Louis XIV, vol. 1, Richelieu, Mazarin, 1624-1661 (Paris: Champion, 1911), 12, 17.

E.H. Jenkins suggests in his rather cursory *A History of the French Navy* (1973), that "when Richelieu came to office he had already in mind the necessity for France to be a real sea power and the vision of her becoming so." Moreover, the "ardent and ruthless centralizer" created a relatively successful military institution that became the foundation for future developments.[34]

In La Roncière's monumental and influential *Histoire de la marine française* (1910), the treatment of Richelieu is more sensitive than La Cour-Gayet's, if only because it is much more detailed. La Roncière recognizes the achievements and important proposals of Richelieu's predecessors, though he credits the application of Richelieu's "iron will" and "powerful organizing spirit" for the beginnings of an organized marine.[35] Brought by atavistic forces to the sea, Richelieu hoped to build a strong royal naval infrastructure worthy of the nobility of France. If internal struggles could be overcome, a glorious colonial empire would be built. Thus, Richelieu's troubles with Ré and La Rochelle were improvised sidelights to a greater programme. Similarly, the centralization of the fractured maritime authority "was a necessary preface" to his other plans. Although Richelieu's administrative structure did not long survive him, according to La Roncière, he willingly imposed limits to his personal authority as he "made a *tabula rasa*...of maritime feudalism."[36] Ultimately, the strain of the Thirty Years' War blocked his designs, and his death caused the subsequent relapse and disintegration of the marine.[37] Nevertheless, in addition to his practical successes, La Roncière credits him with laying the "foundations" necessary for the future felicity of the state.

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[34] E.H. Jenkins, A History of the French Navy: From Its Beginnings to the Present Day (London: MacDonald and Company Ltd., 1973), 15-30.

[35] Charles de la Roncière, Histoire de la marine française. Vol. 4, En quête d'un empire colonial: Richelieu (Paris: Plon, 1910), 485.

[36] La Roncière, Marine française, 4:488, 505, 562, 579, 585.

Gabriel Hanotaux who, with the duc de la Force, wrote the massive *Histoire du cardinal de Richelieu* (1893-1946), relied heavily on La Roncière's work. In this more cursory treatment of the navy, Richelieu's own historiographic influence is equally apparent. According to Hanotaux, the plans of this minister of sound vision suffer a false start, cut short by internal turmoil and the strain of foreign war. Yet Hanotaux vigorously sustains the emphases found in Richelieu's *Testament politique* by emphasizing La Roncière's claim that Richelieu held a more comprehensive "policy of commercial and economic expansion."[38]

Henri Hauser took this a step further, focusing solely on Richelieu's economic policies in *La pensée et l'action économiques du cardinal de Richelieu* (1944).[39] Because the tangible results of Richelieu's commercial efforts were ephemeral, this aspect of his career largely has been ignored. Yet Hauser argues that commercial invigoration of the kingdom was the major part of his genius and unfolding plan for the realm. Although the results may have been poor he laid the foundations and set the precedents necessary for Colbert and the administrative reforms under Louis XIV.[40]

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[37] La Roncière, Histoire de la marine française. Vol. 5, La Guerre de Trente Ans: Colbert (Paris: Plon, 1920), 92.

[38] Gabriel Hanotaux, Histoire du cardinal de Richelieu (Paris: Plon, 1947), 4:527.

[39] Henri Hauser, La pensée et l'action économiques du cardinal de Richelieu (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1944).

[40] Henri Hauser, Pensées économiques, 194.

According to the memoirs, Richelieu had heralded the restoration of the "ancient splendour of the realm" simply with the introduction of the *Compagnie des Cents Associés* in 1626; the news of its commission alone struck fear in the hearts of the commercial interests of England, Holland and Spain.[41] Thus, although Hauser does provide a new focus, really he does nothing more than take Richelieu at his word about his commercial motives. By suggesting that Richelieu was fundamentally concerned with the commercial invigoration of the realm, Hauser is not only misleading but strengthening the grip of Richelieu's historiographic legacy.

A decade later Bernard Schnapper offered a slight re-evaluation of the Richelieu legacy. He argued that Richelieu's concern for colonization was limited and that it was not until the time of Colbert that it was emphasized as an economically sound royal policy at all.[42] A somewhat broader attack on Richelieu's "vision" was presented by Rémy Pithon in 1960. In the early years of the ministry, Pithon argues, Richelieu's foreign policy reacted to the pressures of the moment. No grand foreign policy design existed in 1624, certainly not one as clear as is claimed retrospectively in the *Testament politique*. Indeed as J.H. Elliott boldly re-asserts, "All [Richelieu] could really offer was to pursue [the policies of his immediate predecessors] more efficiently...."[43]

Richelieu's "vision" is attacked most thoroughly, however, by L.A. Boiteux in *Richelieu: Grand-Maître de la*

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[41] Lavollée, Mémoires de Richelieu, 6:146-147.

[42] Bernard Schnapper, "A propos de la doctrine et de la politique coloniale de Richelieu," Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer 42 (1954), 314-328.

[43] J.H. Elliott, Richelieu and Olivares (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 38.

navigation et du commerce de France (1955). Boiteux dismisses the notion of a clear, consistent plan for reform of the marine, preferring instead to focus on Richelieu's self-interested jealousy of the Admiral of France, Henri II duc de Montmorency, and the ruthlessness of his campaign to strip him of his maritime titles.[44] Thus, Boiteux's praise does not fall on Richelieu but rather on those whose efforts and ideas he appropriated, especially Montmorency. To distinguish his work, Boiteux dissociates himself from La Cour-Gayet and Hauser by arguing that Richelieu was not an original thinker at all. Rather, as he convincingly argues, the Cardinal was the "assimilator" and "continuer" of others' plans to which he added his "genius" and "implacable will."[45] Yet this really does not differ greatly from La Roncière's assessment, and therefore at most it is only an unsatisfying first step in a general re-assessment of Richelieu's maritime career. Unfortunately, the most distinguishing feature of Boiteux's work is his personal lack of sympathy for the Cardinal.

For Boiteux, Richelieu had only a self-serving desire for "dictatorial" power, which meant that his administrative changes were not sound. Similarly, his economic reforms had a "superficial character," because his understanding of commercial affairs was simply too weak, and his broad economic programme, as he borrowed it, was sacrificed out of political avarice for relatively insignificant advantage.[46] These were the causes of his failure, and as a result he deserves no association whatsoever with Colbert according to Boiteux. However, these criticisms presuppose that an association with the policies of Colbert would be the greatest mark of success for Richelieu. Boiteux correctly emphasizes Richelieu's political rivalries and does not trust the Cardinal's stated economic motivations and concerns. Thus, by evaluating (and criticizing) their realization he displaces any honest attempt to understand what they really may have been.

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[44] L.A. Boiteux, Richelieu: Grand-Maître de la navigation et du commerce de France (Paris: Ozanne, 1955), 97.

[45] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 30, 81.

[46] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 110, 132, 350, 374.

Boiteux's criticism is misdirected because it also focuses on a presumed grand programme of commercial reform. In a similar way, Carl J. Burckhardt considers the important contributions to the maritime welfare of France by Richelieu's predecessors and his indebtedness to them.[47] In this case, Richelieu's motivations for breaking Montmorency's power grew from his master-plan for general reform. Significantly, however, Burckhardt adds breadth to Boiteux's assessment of Richelieu's motives by recognizing correctly the important role of the military: "He had two objectives in view: the creation of a fighting fleet and the construction of a merchant navy."[48] Yet by no means is it clear that financial and commercial concerns were even this important to him.

Joseph Bergin, in *Cardinal Richelieu: Power and the Pursuit of Wealth* (1985), reveals that Richelieu's personal wealth was indeed a major concern to him. Throughout his career he acquired various maritime holdings and naval offices that were extremely lucrative. According to Bergin, despite the failure of his stated commercial policies,

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[47] Carl J. Burckhardt, Richelieu and His Age, vol. 2, Assertion of Power and Cold War. Translated by Bernard Hoy. (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1970).

[48] Burckhardt, Richelieu, 28; Etienne Taillemite shares an almost identical analysis with Burckhardt in his recent survey of the history of the French navy. Etienne Taillemite, L'histoire ignorée de la marine française (Paris: Perrin, 1988).

Richelieu successfully used the marine for a number of purposes including "[placing] many of his servants on its payroll"; its structure, therefore, helped him manage and administer his own financial and political empire.[49] The acquisition of money was not incidental to him, however, for as Bergin stresses his financial empire was an integral part of his greater pursuit of power.[50] Richelieu's "[determination] to profit from his office" required certain reforms toward a "far greater measure of uniformity and control from the centre."[51] Such control was important not only to exploit efficiently his financial resources, but because "if his policies failed and he lost his hold on power, no amount of wealth would cushion his fall."[52]

Richelieu's authority was never complete or static. Indeed, as A. Lloyd Moote suggests in *Louis XIII: The Just* (1989),[53] Richelieu was not the director of royal policy and throughout the reign, he was "painfully uncertain of [the] support" from Louis upon which his political survival depended.[54] In other words, he was constantly aware of his need for Louis' favour in his rise to power. Bergin's more recent work on the Cardinal's early career reveals that "Richelieu who returned to ministerial office in 1624 was neither a saviour-figure and statesman who was the exception to every rule, nor a genius who could blithely defy the ordinary laws of political gravity."[55] His career was marked by the constant need to prove himself. Thus in 1624 Richelieu, like his Spanish counterpart Olivares, seized the political opportunity of responding to the apparent need for reform and re-organization.[56] But, as Elliott suggests, because he "never felt sure" of Louis' support (especially in 1624),[57] Richelieu had to establish himself politically not through grandiose plans but with his "obvious ministerial abilities."[58] As Burckhardt says, "what really interested Richelieu was the dynamic realization of policy,"[59] for he depended upon practical successes from his policies to win the King's favour and enhance his political influence. In addition to great wealth and its associated power, a strong military navy under his direction offered him the opportunity he needed.

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[49] Joseph Bergin, Cardinal Richelieu: Power and the Pursuit of Wealth (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985) 58, 118.

[50] See also Elliott, Richelieu and Olivares, 55.

[51] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 95.

[52] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 67.

[53] A. Lloyd Moote, Louis XIII: The Just (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).

[54] A. Lloyd Moote, Louis XIII: The Just, 296-297.

He was challenged, therefore, throughout his career, not only to acquire the various titles and privileges associated with the sea but to use them to define an unprecedented authority with which to elevate the moribund institution of the marine to use in his pursuit of successful policy and glory in the Crown's name.

Orest Ranum, in his *Richelieu and the Councillors of Louis XIII* (1963), points out one of the greatest dangers of studying seventeenth-century government: compartmentalizing its various functions. "Cutting the government of Louis XIII into chapters on finance, justice, foreign affairs, and war must be done, but the whole must be preserved at the same time by analysing the functions of the major personalities which cut across these lines."[60] This is particularly the case with the marine, for it was almost entirely the creation of Richelieu and therefore it must be considered as an extension of the political personality which encouraged its growth. Richelieu was not a commercial reformer or naval commander, nor was he solely an administrator. Rather, he was a minister of the King constantly aware of his precarious political position and the need to build his master's trust, and the development of the marine was an expression of this political struggle.

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[55] Joseph Bergin, The Rise of Richelieu (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1991), 262.

[56] Bergin, Rise to Power, 258; Elliot, Olivares, 79.

[57] Elliott, Olivares, 59, 136-137.

[58] Elliott, Olivares, 38.

[59] Burckhardt, 54.

Richelieu's historiographical legacy has been powerful. Yet modern Richelieu scholarship suggests that his tremendous concern with naval affairs should be reconsidered. His naval programme was inextricably tied to his personal political considerations. Thus, criticism must not be based on the success of preconceived long-range plans nor on comparisons with Colbert. Rather, his earliest intentions must be understood in their immediate political context, and his efforts to realize these intentions must be traced throughout his ministry. This reveals a remarkably consistent programme: in his ambition, Richelieu wished to be in control of the marine, to elevate it and exercise it successfully as a primarily military institution in order to win the King's trust.

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[60] Orest A. Ranum, Richelieu and the Councillors of Louis XIII: A Study of the Secretaries of State and Superintendents of Finance in the Ministry of Richelieu 1635-1642 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1963), 1.

CHAPTER 1

EARLY INITIATIVES, 1624-1627

At the time of Richelieu's nomination to the Royal Council, the most recent comprehensive legal definition of the powers and jurisdiction of the Admiral of France was that outlined in an edict of 1584.[1] Provisions in the edict encouraged private subjects to build ships, and it was left to them to assure that they were properly armed for their own defence. In times of war, however, the Admiral could requisition them and arm them as he saw necessary:

> In all armies that are put to sea, the Admiral of France shall be and shall remain the head, the lieutenant-general, and will be obeyed in all places near the sea, no matter whose they may be or to whom they may belong, without contradiction.

In other words, the military authority of the Admiral was theoretically incontestable, yet it was understood that private initiative was the sole source of French maritime activity and strength.

The 1584 edict recognized many other wide-ranging powers over justice, coastal defence and almost every imaginable maritime concern. Primarily, however, the administration of confiscations, fines, passage and dockage fees and the regulation of various claims was the focus. Significantly, no ship was to set sail in French waters without first obtaining (for a fee) a clearance, or *congé*, from the Admiral. Such potentially lucrative privileges as this, plus the edict's considerable attention to fishing regulations, betrays the extent to which the Admiralty, and by association the marine, did not represent major military institutions to the Crown. Indeed, there was no notion of a royal military navy distinct from the private merchant marine.

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[1] "Édit sur la jurisdiction de l'amiral, le droit de prise, la pêche du hareng, l'entretien des navires, etc.," Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises, vol. 16. Isambert, Taillandier, Decrusy, eds. (Paris: Isambert, 1822-1833; reprint, Farnborough: Gregg Press, Ltd., 1966), no. 278.

Coastal defence and the protection of commerce had been left entirely to the efforts of individual merchants. Pirates from the Barbary Coast, and elsewhere, habitually disrupted French commerce. As a matter of course, French subjects were forced to salute foreign vessels in open water. With absolutely no royal warships, the generally deplorable state of maritime affairs in France restricted the practicable authority of the Admiral and left his theoretical military authority utterly negligible. Indeed, command for a military operation was not even necessarily granted to the titular Admiral but by the King's temporary commission to whoever was most qualified and available.[2] Otherwise, effective maritime authority in France was defined by long-standing customs and varying local traditions.[3]

Thus, the edict of 1584 made provision for the regulation of the commercial *status quo*, primarily to the financial benefit of the Admiral. He was given the privilege of policing the economics of the sea and, in times of need, had a theoretical but largely irrelevant authority to recruit whatever might be available to the King's service. However, the Admiralty privileges that he exercised were restricted further by an inordinate number of legal claimants. With the growth of the kingdom, France had inherited, in addition to the office of the Admiral of France, the established, competing admiralties of Brittany, Guyenne and the Levant. Each of these formal offices enjoyed its own privileges and legal traditions. Also, many provincial governors, town councils, land owners and abbeys claimed various traditional admiralty privileges. Thus, for the Admiral of France the sea represented a disputed but potentially lucrative fiefdom. In practice, and from the perspective of the Crown, the Admiralty was a series of competing and ineffective sinecures.

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[2] For example, in 1622 against La Rochelle the duc de Guise commanded French forces, not the duc de Montmorency, the current titular Admiral of France.

[3] Augustin Jal, Abraham Du Quesne et la marine de son temps (Paris: Plon), 45.

Yet the sea was an object of utmost importance to seventeenth-century governments generally. For instance, the English considered it their legal domain.[4] The Dutch enjoyed strength and prosperity from maritime commerce out of all proportion to their size, and in 1621 they founded another mercantile company for the West Indies.[5] In imitation, Spain, whose strength traditionally depended on protecting the sea routes throughout its empire, organized the privileged *Almirantazgo* trading company of Seville in 1624 for trade with northern Europe, as part of a commercial and naval revival.[6] Further plans were laid for Spanish companies focused on India and the Levant.[7]

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[4] Indeed, an extensive legal defence of England's claim to dominion over the seas was written (originally) in 1636. From the English perspective, France had no claim to the seas because the authority of French Admirals always had been restricted legally and practically to taxing and imposing customs on foreign ships on its shores or to confiscating and dividing the remains of wrecks. They had jurisdiction on their shores as reflected by their own legal history, and, put simply, "the French have no Dominion over the Sea." John Seldin, Mare clausum; the Right and Dominion of the Sea (London: Kembe and Thomas, 1663; microfilm, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, Inc.), 114-116.

[5] Fournier, Hydrographie, 337.

[6] The company had a military mandate as well to "ruin Dutch trade" with "the right of visit and search over other nations." D.P. O'Connell, Richelieu (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968), 145.

The advantages enjoyed, and the potential threat represented, by these maritime powers were not universally ignored in France. In addition to the foreign mercantile companies providing practical models, France had some economic theorists of her own.[8] Thus, a number of innovative proposals for the marine were considered by the Royal Council.[9] The controller-general of commerce, François Du Noyer de Saint-Martin, suggested bringing all companies together with one encompassing charter under the direct authority of the King. *La Royale compagnie de la navigation et commerce pour les voyages de long cours*, as it would be called, with a fleet of forty-five vessels permanently maintained and armed would make France powerful at sea, establish a colonial empire and enrich the nation by promoting and protecting commerce.[10] Equally ambitious was Du Noyer's response to the immediate concern in the Council for the lack of an effective coast-guard. He suggested an established militia, *La Royale compagnie française du Saint-Sêpulchre de Hiérusalem*, for the permanent protection of commerce and the control of Barbary pirates, a proposal with much support in 1624.

Also among those concerned with maritime affairs was Henri II duc de Montmorency. As the titled Admiral of France, he recruited captains to the moribund *compagnies de garde-côtes* which were theoretically under his command. He forbade the emigration of carpenters and experienced seamen from France and ordered their formal registration for recruiting purposes. For administrative support, he created a Council of Admiralty in January 1624.[11] Most significantly, he advocated the foundation of trading companies, personally backing companies for the East Indies and for New France. At an Assembly of Notables in 1617 he presented his efforts as part of a general plan for the invigoration of commercial activity and the protection of merchants.

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[7] Elliott, Olivares, 70.

[8] Cole, Mercantilist Doctrines, 213-214.

[9] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 47-49; Burckhardt, Richelieu, 44.

[10] La Roncière, Marine française, 4:481-484.

In his capacity as Admiral, and as a duke of a powerful noble family, Montmorency had a vested interest in the expansion of maritime activity and therefore worked to develop this interest. In addition to the Admiralty of France, by 1624 he had accumulated the Admiralty of Guyenne, and he held a claim to that of Brittany and the Vice-Royalty of New France. These he attempted to exploit fully by enforcing his privilege of granting *congés*. With this accumulation of titles, Montmorency was in a position to benefit handsomely from a near monopoly of Admiralty privileges and revenues. In 1624, however, this systematic exploitation of the fragmentation of authority was the only successful innovation in French maritime affairs.

This was of no particular concern to Richelieu; he saw no more clearly than anyone else the value of an invigorated marine or of reforming the Admiralty.[12] In his first months in the Council, he was concerned much more with winning the King's trust and with his battle for political survival against the powerful minister La Vieuville and the potentially dangerous ultra-Catholic *dévot* faction at

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[11] Fournier, Hydrographie, 343.

[12] The opposite is suggested in many works including: Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 42; and, La Roncière, Marine française, 4:462, 485.

Court.[13] La Vieuville, a member of Montmorency's Council of Admiralty,[14] had been conducting a clearly anti-Hapsburg foreign policy before Richelieu's arrival. He had begun negotiations for the marriage of Louis' sister, Henriette-Marie, to Charles Prince of Wales and had talked with the English King James I about a joint expeditionary force, under the German Count Mansfeld, to regain the Palatinate for Frederick V Count Palatine.[15] On 10 June 1624 La Vieuville arranged a Dutch alliance at Compiègne by which the Dutch agreed to continue to fight Spain, or to provide military aid to France if the occasion required, in return for immediate and future financial aid.[16] The pro-Catholic *dévots* at Court, including Marie de Medici the Queen Mother--upon whom La Vieuville depended for support--made such anti-Hapsburg alliances with Protestant states a dangerous political strategy for La Vieuville to pursue.[17] Thus, by conducting a pamphleteering campaign against him and by attacking his alleged financial mismanagement, Richelieu was able to encourage directly La Vieuville's arrest on 13 August. Within four months he had replaced the most influential member of the King's Royal Council.

Immediately following La Vieuville's disgrace, Louis told his Council, "I will watch my affairs...and this I will do with pleasure because it will be done with order."[18] Thus, Richelieu's early political agenda depended upon his dissociation from the aggrandizement of ambitious enemies, the establishment of "order" in the King's finances and elsewhere and upon pursuing a successful foreign policy, distinct from La Vieuville's Palatinate emphasis; this developed into a particular focus on the strategic Valtelline region in the Italian-Swiss Alps, for which he already had been given a special responsibility in April and for which Louis himself was particularly concerned.[19]

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[13] Within one month, he was arguing the "precedence of cardinals over constables and chancellors in the king's Council." "Pour la préséance des cardinaux sur les connestable et chancelier. Mai 1624," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:84-85.

[14] La Cour-Gayet, Marine militaire, 45.

[15] Geoffrey Parker, The Thirty Years' War (New York: Military Heritage Press, 1987), 69.

[16] Richard Bonney, The King's Debts: Finance and Politics in France, 1589-1661 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 122.

[17] Parker, Thirty Years' War, 69; Parker, Europe in Crisis, 199.

In December Richelieu's secret intermediary with Mansfeld reported that all was ready at Calais for the previously arranged joint force except for the arrival of French troops on ships from Rouen. The expedition was being held up, and France was "at risk of suffering a grave prejudice to the affairs and to the reputation of the King." Richelieu was not pleased with the "negligence and nonchalance of those commissioned to sail the vessels,"[20] but he was not greatly concerned. In the Autumn of 1624, with Richelieu's encouragement, French forces invaded the Valtelline. In connection with the invasion, he promised to help Savoy the next Spring with its siege of Genoa.[21] This would cut Spanish communications through Milan and weaken Spain's defence of the Alpine passes. Exploiting this personal foreign policy success was of much greater concern to Richlieu than the Mansfeld expedition, and if the marine were to play any role at all it would be in this.

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[18] "Ce que le Roy dist au Conseil après la disgrâce de La Vieuville. Milieu d'août 1624," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:104.

[19] Victor L. Tapié, France in the Age of Louis XIII and Richelieu. Translated by D. McN. Lockie. (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974), 128.

[20] "M. de Villars au cardinal de Richelieu. Calais, 24 février 1625," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:170.

[21] Tapié, France in the Age of Louis XIII, 149; Parker, Thirty Years' War, 71.

Recognizing that "only the Dutch are capable of handling all the armaments that Spain can put to sea,"[22] Richelieu hoped to get in time twenty Dutch ships, in fulfilment of the Compiègne treaty, to supplement a diversion from the sea which the Admiral of the Levant, Charles de Lorraine duc de Guise, had agreed to provide.[23] However, despite the importance of the siege to Richelieu,[24] and Guise's optimistic hope that Spanish influence in Italy soon would be broken,[25] the naval operation was only a sidelight. Richelieu watched hopefully as the English prepared a fleet of 100 ships against Spain and was pleased to hear of the Anglo-Dutch attack on Cadiz in the Autumn of 1624 for then "it [seemed] that everything conspires to beat the pride of Spain."[26] For his part, however, Richelieu wished to keep control of the Valtelline and to encourage the English. A diversion from the sea by Guise, who was ordered specifically not to fly royal colours as unnecessary provocation of the Spaniards,[27] was the only naval policy he considered, for Richelieu could scarcely afford to antagonize the *dévots* as he, like La Vieuville before him, also depended upon the Queen Mother Marie's patronage.

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[22] "Mémoire pour le Roi. [Début de mai] 1625," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:181-186.

[23] "Récit des négotiations diplomatiques relatives à la Valtelline," Bibliothèque Nationale, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 340, fol. 78; microfilm, Bibliothèque Nationale services photographiques.

[24] Rémy Pithon, "Les débuts difficiles du ministère de Richelieu et la crise de Valtelline (1621-1627)," Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique 74 (October-December 1960), 289-332.

[25] La Roncière, Marine Française, 4:459.

[26] "Mémoire pour le Roi. [Début de mai] 1625," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:181-182.

[27] P. Linage de Vauciennes, Mémoires sur l'origine des guerres qui travaillent l'Europe depuis cinquante ans (Paris: Barbin, 1677), 258.

This suggests that Richelieu had a relatively myopic perception of the maritime concerns of the state, for at the same time he was ignoring warnings of the danger of Huguenot rebellion on the western seaboard in conjunction with some sort of naval operation.[28] Indeed, on 18 January 1625 the duc de Soubise, the younger brother of the duc de Rohan (the Huguenot *chef de parti*), attacked Blavet near the Gulf of Morbihan in Brittany and seized six vessels of the duc de Nevers. Owing mostly to inclement weather, the attack was only partially successful, and after losing some of the ships, Soubise escaped only by 6 February.

For Richelieu, however, this attack was not a cause of great alarm. Indeed, he appeared not to be concerned at all with the Huguenots or with the royal naval weakness that the attack had revealed. Rather, he felt simply that such troubles with the Huguenots should be kept as quiet as possible.[29] Reflecting on the Soubise affair in June, Richelieu said "that the grand and diverse affairs that are being faced require that His Majesty not look presently to the violence of this offence." Indeed he hoped even to use Soubise's vessels at Genoa,[30] suggesting that the rebel only "requests to be used in Italy by sea, with the vessels that he has taken, those that he has, and those that he can bring from La Rochelle."[31]

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[28] "M. de Guron au cardinal de Richelieu. Château de Guron, 22 mai 1624," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:77; "L'archevêque de Bordeaux au cardinal de Richelieu. Bordeaux, 9 janvier 1625," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:145.

[29] "Instructions pour M. de Saint-Géry. Paris, 2 décembre 1624," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:131.

[30] "[Mémoire pour le Roi.] juin 1625," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:97.

According to Richelieu, retribution should involve as little as returning the stolen ships to the King. Unconcerned with the implication of French dependence on foreign maritime states, he was willing to bring in a Dutch admiral "to arrange the exchange."[32] After re-instating the original captains and lending the ships to the service of the Duke of Savoy, Soubise even would be allowed to lead a squadron. To deny this leniency and inconsistency in policy on his part, Richelieu emphasized that to do any less than this "would be to give him the opportunity to show foreign states the shame of France, and the trophies from a victory that he won by surprise and treason."[33]

In the fall of 1625 Richelieu offered a series of lofty proposals to Louis for the re-organization of the realm. The section concerning the marine is often offered by historians as evidence of Richelieu's early and elaborate plan for reform. Not one to espouse limited aims, he proclaimed: "We must combat the might of Spain."[34] Yet the military focus was simply an extension of the Genoese affair--he recognized the disruptive potential of a strong French galley fleet in the Mediterranean that could interfere with Spain and its Italian and Rhenish possessions. Moreover, the body of the text and the details were merely borrowed from an experienced sea-captain, Isaac de Razilly, upon whom Richelieu later was to rely a great deal.[35] Thus, the *Règlement de 1625* reveals little about naval concerns and is neither evidence of a personal "preoccupation," the first sign of a comprehensive plan for naval reform nor the glimmerings of a nascent naval genius as many suggest.[36] Indeed, Richelieu's "hostility" and mistrust of anything approved by Montmorency actually had put him in opposition to similar proposals by Du Noyer and others.[37]

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[31] "Advis sur la rébellion du Sieur de Soubise. S.l., [juin] 1625," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:191.

[32] "Mémoire qui a esté baillé au Sieur de Bellujon, envoyé à La Rochelle. S.l., 25 mai 1625," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:187.

[33] Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 2:192.

[34] "Règlement pour la mer. [1625]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:163-164.

In 1624 the Council decided to contract the coast guard to the powerful tax-farmer Jean de la Grange and his financial surety Claude de Charlot, but the contract was not put into effect. Again, Richelieu's negative influence was at work. He had been opposed to farming the coast guard because it gave "powers to people who could abuse them to the prejudice of the state and of the service of the King."[38] Thus, he was not pleased with the prospect of granting the possibility of financial independence to these financiers. However, Charlot was especially fit to be victimized by Richelieu, for he had been implicated in La Vieuville's mismanagement of maritime affairs. Among the many accusations against La Vieuville had been his abuse of "the ports and harbours of Brittany": specifically, by favouring Charlot and allowing his abuse of the farm at Brouage (important for its production and export of salt), La Vieuville had been draining the treasury and making himself dangerously powerful.[39]

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[35] L. Deschamps, "Le mémoire du chevalier Isaac de Razilly," Revue de Géographie 19 (1886), 456, n. 1.

[36] La Roncière, Marine française, 4:462; Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 57; Hauser, Pensée économique, 64, 34-35; Taillemite, Histoire ignorée, 53; La Cour-Gayet, Marine militaire, 32.

[37] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 48; La Roncière, Marine française, 4:502; Burckhardt, Richelieu, 44-45.

[38] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 49.

At the same time, Richelieu recognized the broader personal political implications of the maritime designs of figures more powerful than Charlot. The duc d'Épernon, governor of Guyenne, had a "power to be feared" because he held the mouth of the Gironde. More dangerous was a plot that Richelieu revealed by which César de Vendôme, the governor of Brittany (a position through which he claimed the Admiralty of Brittany) would obtain Belle-Isle, lying across from the Gulf of Morbihan, for his family.[40] With such acquisitions, he threatened to become "the master of all of the holdings along the border of Brittany, and of the maritime cities which face La Rochelle and Spain."[41]

This observation is noteworthy because war against the English and the Huguenots of La Rochelle, and later against Spain, were two of Richelieu's most consuming preoccupations throughout his career. Moreover, they were the two theatres of operation for the navy that he was to develop. This suggests that he recognized the scope of the potential political and diplomatic significance of maritime holdings. But his concern with maritime affairs in 1624-1625 was a result of his recognition of the dangerous independence provided for others by control of maritime affairs and his correspondingly acute sense of personal political survival and competition.

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[39] "Advis contre M. de La Vieuville. [Juillet ou début d'août] 1624," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:96-98.

[40] It was this prospect that led Richelieu to declare the island to be "of such importance that it holds in subjection all of the rivers from Bayonne to Brest." Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:191-192.

[41] "Extrait des papiers de M. de la Vieuville. Fin août 1624," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:108-110. His brother, Le Grand Prieur, Alexandre de Vendôme had coveted the Admiralty. Jean-Marie Constant, Les Conjurateurs: Le premier libéralisme politique sous Richelieu (Paris: Hachette, 1987), 22.

The first evidence of any concern for long-range naval development came in 1626 in the wake of Soubise's eventual defeat. Soubise had settled on the island of Oléron as a base of operations to pursue other disruptive attacks along the Atlantic coast of France. To engage the Huguenot rebel, the now ready Dutch ships promised at Compiègne, plus eight more borrowed from the English, were gathered under the command of Admiral Montmorency and a Dutch Vice-Admiral. Both sides suffered in the 15 September 1625 battle, but Montmorency was able to land forces, led by the maréschal de Toiras, and then later to chase Soubise's forces all the way to England where he petitioned for protection.[42]

Early in 1626 the Dutch, unhappy with French policy with respect to Spain and to their Calvinist rebels, recalled their support and their vessels. Some readied ships belonging to Vendôme were pressed for service, but without these there would have been very little with which to watch La Rochelle. This dependence on Vendôme led Richelieu to suggest for the first time that, ideally, Louis should develop a balance between land and sea forces:

> His Majesty can judge from this accident how much his foresight in having readied the Breton vessels was useful and necessary and how in grander affairs one must have a long-range view, bar consideration of the expenses, and have always two strings for one's bow or many anchors for one's ship.[43]

From the time of Soubise's initial attack there was some suspicion of Vendôme's motives and his effort to stop Soubise.[44] This suggests, therefore, that it was neither

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[42] Pierre Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:279.

[43] "Advis sur les affaires présentes qu'a le Roy en février 1626," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:295.

[44] "Le duc de Cossé-Brissac au cardinal de Richelieu. Port-Louis, 15 février 1625," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:163.

Vendôme's usefulness nor his ships that impressed the Cardinal, rather it was the political danger that he posed. Such was the nature of his inchoate programme to build the maritime strength of France.

In 1626 Richelieu's formal policy was generally very cautious. He signed the Peace of La Rochelle in February and then settled with Spain over the Valtelline with the unsatisfactory treaty of Monzon shortly thereafter.[45] But personally, 1626 was a challenging year and marked a dramatic increase in his maritime authority. He was facing the first serious political challenge to his growing authority; the Chalais Conspiracy of the summer of 1626 involved some of the most prominent figures in France, among whom Vendôme was a major player. Richelieu emerged successfully and exploited the victory by breaking Vendôme's power and forbidding any similar claims to maritime privileges in the future. Moreover, by August he had purchased Montmorency's various maritime titles and invoked current mercantilist rhetoric to found large chartered companies, making himself the most powerful figure in connection with the sea.

Opposition to Richelieu's marriage designs for Louis' brother and heir presumptive, Gaston d'Orléans, turned into a murderous plot when the extent of Richelieu's political strength was revealed upon the arrest of Gaston's governor, the Marshal d'Ornano, in May. The plot was disclosed by an ally, Achille d'Estampes Valençay, and Richelieu was able to do more than escape death. By the end of the month he had made an arrangement for co-operation among the King, the Queen Mother and Gaston; and Louis assured Richelieu of his personal support and protection. Four days later, on 13 June, Vendôme was arrested. Among the charges Richelieu brought against him were his ineffective defence of Blavet and his personal "designs...on Nantes, Blavet and Brest." Then Richelieu expressly excluded all claims to privileges of Admiralty through the title of Governor of Brittany from the commission of Vendôme's successor, Thémines, on 23 June.[46]

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[45] This co-operation with Spain embittered the Dutch and led to the recall of support and vessels.

In addition to dissociating formally the governorship of Brittany from the sea in August, Richelieu bought all of Montmorency's naval titles which he had been coveting since late in 1625.[47] The Duke's implication in the conspiracy may have allowed Richelieu to strip him of his maritime offices in exchange for clemency,[48] but certainly the political atmosphere was appropriate for Richelieu to force the issue by purchasing the titles for a considerable sum.

Most significantly, however, Richelieu's political victory in the conspiracy marked the critical step in a process that he had begun on a far greater scale. In the summer of 1625 a group of entrepreneurs had proposed the foundation of the *Compagnie des cent associés pour le commerce général* with an extensive mandate that rivalled all earlier proposals for reform considered by the Council. In accordance with Richelieu's new and growing emphasis on awarding "prerogatives and advantages similar to those enjoyed by the companies established in other states,"[49] the company's charter of March 1626 outlined tremendous privileges. To undertake the "general commerce of this kingdom, either by sea or on land,"[50] the Gulf of Morbihan and surrounding area was designated as a permanent seat with a "free city." In addition, the company would be released from financial accountability to institutions in "Brittany or of any other place" and "of governors, admirals, masters of artillery, masters of ports and all other officers for whatever reason and in whichever situation...."[51] In other words, neither the titled Admirals nor anyone else would have the authority to regulate the affairs of the company.

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[46] Le Mercure françois: ou Suite de l'histoire de nostre temps, sous le règne du Très-Chrestien Roy de France & de Navarre, Lovys XIII (Paris: Richer, 1627), 12:326-332.

[47] Pierre Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:237.

[48] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 95.

[49] "Remèdes aux déprédations des marchands et moyens de restablir le commerce. [Derniers mois de] 1626," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:570.

The autonomy accorded the company was not strictly political or commercial. The right to defend itself involved the requirement to furnish vessels and to "cast cannon and shot, make gun powder and saltpetre, arms and all other tools and items necessary for war and for commerce...."[52] It was able to establish armouries anywhere in the realm without being subject to local authority. In other words, the company would be given tremendous military potential as well.

A key political opportunity was seized by Richelieu who agreed to provide protection as the company's Superintendent of Commerce, and in the March 1626 charter he styled himself the *Surintendent général du commerce de ce royaume*.[53] To add substance to this embellishment of his charge, an edict of July stated that the suppression of this position after Richelieu's death (a stipulation of the March edict) now would have effect only for the affairs of the company. By attempting to make the Superintendency of Commerce an office of the realm in this way, it was feared that Richelieu was weakening the traditional privileges and commercial independence of Brittany. Thus, the Parlement at Rennes remonstrated against this July ratification of the company's charter along with the registration of the definition of Thémine's commission and resisted with a tenacity that forced him to put his plans for personal aggrandizement temporarily on hold.[54]

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[50] "Contrat de la Compagnie du Morbihan ou des Cent Associés. Charonne, 31 mars 1626," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:304.

[51] Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:308, 310.

[52] Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:306-307.

[53] According to Richard Bonney, Richelieu already held a claim to the directorship of French commerce to which he was nominated in January 1626. Bonney, King's Debts, 132, n. 3.

In August 1626, however, after emerging successfully from the Chalais conspiracy and having purchased Montmorency's titles, he dared to increase further his authority by abolishing the various Admiralty titles and subordinating their privileges to the Superintendency in a third ratification of the company's charter. It declared that "the rights and charges of the Admiralty will continue in their strength and vigour to be devolved to him who will have the directorship of commerce,"[55] that is, upon Richelieu. Whatever the Cardinal hoped to achieve for the commercial benefit of the realm, he was consolidating actively the political position he had won in the La Vieuville affair and the Chalais conspiracy by opening the door to a new definition of military authority.

This new definition was contained in the Edict of October 1626.[56] Independent of the charter of any company, it was the final articulation of the authority he was defining for himself. It established him as the Grand-

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[54] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 94.

[55] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 96.

[56] "Lettres d'érection en titre d'office de la charge de Grand Maître, Chef et Surintendent général de la Navigation et Commerce de France, et provisions de cet office en faveur du cardinal de Richelieu. Saint-Germain-en-Laye, octobre 1626," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:511-515.

Master, Chief and Superintendent General of Commerce and Navigation with jurisdiction over all of France. According to the edict, the opportunity was being taken to "enrich our subjects, chase out idleness and weakness and strike out usury and illegitimate gain." Thus, Richelieu was to be the regulator of commerce with the:

> power, authority and special mandate to deal with everyone, [to] receive and examine all propositions that have been, and will be made with respect to commerce, [to] discuss them and consider their merit, usefulness, resolve and [to] assure all articles, treaties, contracts and conventions.

Formally, Richelieu now had power that the Admiral never could have claimed. Rather than merely regulating an existing commercial situation for taxation, as Grand-Master of Commerce he controlled and defined commercial enterprise within the realm. In addition, under the October edict, the coast guard was now his direct responsibility. Coastal defence, as a function of his office, was not to be left to individual initiative. It was not to be farmed but supported by the Crown, and it would act as the permanent royal reserve for military operations. A general commission was given to Richelieu for times of war to assemble these vessels into fleets. Those subsequently given command were required to "give orders and commands to the vessels...in accordance with the powers which will be granted [by the King] for the time of war"--after which time, the vessels would be returned by Richelieu to the duty of guarding the coast. Theoretically, the directorship of war-time operations was under the personal authority of the King; no longer could the military authority of the navy be claimed by a venal office holder.

Prior to the promulgation of the edict of October, Richelieu had hoped to maintain good relations with England, but by October he was resolved to meet what he now saw as a direct military threat to the maritime security of France:

the menace of an English invasion in co-operation with rebellious La Rochelle.[57] This is a coincidence that is hard to overlook, for there is no doubt that in the event of a conflict Richelieu would have been allowed to choose and to direct the command. According to the edict, Richelieu was to have the marine function "by such people as he would have commit." Moreover, his power was not to be questioned by any other authority regardless of its claim, and he was to be "obeyed and listened to diligently by the officers, captains and commanders of ships and by all others who may be affected."[58]

By focusing on the English threat, Richelieu hoped to wed his increased powers over commerce and a permanent coast guard to the military authority that he would be allowed to exercise. Contrary to his claim in his memoirs, Richelieu saw the opportunity to distinguish the Grand-Mastership from the old Admiralty in this way by its practical comprehensiveness and distinctly military potency. By successfully exercising this implied military directorship in the name of the King, as the Superintendent over new, semi-autonomous and war-ready companies and as the head of a permanent coast guard and war reserve, the moribund military authority of the Admiralty would be re-invigorated, regularized and in his hands. In response to the English threat, therefore, Richelieu insisted on the fortification of coastal islands and towns. Appropriately, the acquisition of a fleet was central to his preparations. To this end, he contracted the hurried construction of vessels by private French contractors, and negotiated the purchase of six warships of considerable size from the Dutch.

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[57] Late in August Richelieu worked toward "good relations between the two crowns." See, "Instruction au sieur de Bassompierre...et au sieur comte de Tillières...ambassadeurs extraordinaires vers le Roy de la Grande-Bretagne. 23 août 1626," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:249. In October, after an English attack on French merchant vessels, he felt that "they will not be satisfied with this, and the Huguenots are preparing to back them up." "A M. de Toiras. 23 octobre 1626," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:279.

[58] Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 310.

The manipulation of chartered companies to his advantage in 1626 was not restricted to the *Cent associés*. Another great mercantile company received Richelieu's sponsorship, *La Compagnie de St. Pierre fleurdelysée*. Its May charter referred to him as the *Surintendent et réformateur général du commerce*.[59] This company wanted Le Havre as a free port, just as the *Cent associés* had wanted Morbihan. In addition to receiving the Grand-Mastership in October, Richelieu was appointed governor of Le Havre, ostensibly "to establish commerce."[60] Yet the company's request for the port was refused by Richelieu himself.[61] In other words, he supported mercantile enterprise but not any that would encroach upon his personal political ambition. More revealing of Richelieu's interest in Le Havre than his stated interest in commerce is the association of the governor, the marquis de Villars, with Vendôme and the Chalais conspiracy. Le Havre was a potential refuge of the conspirators. Under the banner of commercial reformer, Richelieu bought all of Villars' titles in the area;[62] then he ordered the new Dutch ships to anchor there rather than at Brest as originally intended.[63] In short, Richelieu was adding new gubernatorial power to the power granted by the Edict of October to increase the direct control he had over military vessels. Thereafter, he was to put more effort into dredging and fortifying Le Havre than developing it as a commercial centre.[64]

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[59] "Contrat de la Compagnie de la Nacelle de Saint-Pierre fleurdelysée. Limours, 19 mai 1626," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:321-338; Richelieu supported a third company in 1626, the *compagnie de St. Christophe* of October. "Contrat d'association de la Compagnie de Saint-Christophe. Paris, 31 octobre 1626," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:508-510.

[60] "Au Roi, S.l., [première quinzaine d'octobre 1626]," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:497.

[61] La Roncière, Marine française, 4:499.

[62] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 82-83.

Not everyone was blind to the implications of these moves. In November the King received a prophetic warning that "he should be on guard against the Cardinal, given that beyond Le Havre he wants Brest, Brouage, and to have maritime places generally, and that he wants to bridle France through the charge he has over commerce and these places."[65] In the same way that Richelieu had attacked the dangerous personal political ambitions of others such as Vendôme, he was now open to question. By the end of the year, Richelieu was acting as governor at Brouage;[66] this gave him another potentially lucrative port, an important balance to La Rochelle and a possible centre of military resistance to combined Anglo-Rochelais aggression.

The economic justifications upon which he continued to depend for his growing military influence were not convincing to everyone. To defend his accumulation of vessels Richelieu claimed that in addition to the vessels that commercial companies put to sea "the King should maintain a sufficient number to maintain them sovereignly in case their designs are opposed."[67] Ostensibly, therefore, the ships he had contracted from Holland were intended "to purge the sea of pirates." Yet on 11 November 1626 Richelieu received a plea to "lend some [of the ships]...for the assistance of merchant ships as they need it very much...." Moreover he was asked to allow the merchants to command them themselves.[68] To do otherwise, the writer complained, "is to abandon the merchants to the hands of warriors...."[69] Thus, even the merchants of Normandy whose interests were being defended and whom Richelieu himself claimed to be helping, feared that the Cardinal's real motive for purchasing the vessels was military or political.

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[63] "A M. le chevalier de Valencay. S.l., 26 octobre 1626," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:503.

[64] Richelieu entrusted the formal governorship to his maternal uncle Armador de La Porte. Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 59, 84.

[65] "Note sur le comportement du Premier écuyer. [Seconde quinzaine de novembre] 1626," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 2:550.

[66] He was the *lieutenant-général* under Marie de Medici who was the formal governess. Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 85.

This same correspondent later expressed concern over Richelieu's series of edicts in 1626:

> Commerce is in decline not only because of external disorder, which the rulings being well observed will correct, but also because merchants suffer great loss and damage for other reasons, and they are perhaps more susceptible to internal causes.[70]

The author recognized the actual emphasis of the 1626 legislation: the need to regulate external affairs rather than to respond sensitively to the economic woes of the realm. Indeed, by this time Richelieu had given up on registering the August Edict of the *Cent associés* and now only pushed for the October edict which most clearly defined his political and military authority.[71]

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[67] "Remèdes aux déprédations des marchands et moyens de restablir le commerce. [Derniers mois de] 1626," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:569-570.

[68] "M. de Lauson au cardinal de Richelieu. Rouen, 11 novembre 1626," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:524-527.

[69] Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:525.

[70] "M. de Lauson au cardinal de Richelieu. Rouen, 3 janvier 1627," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 2:17.

Nevertheless, commerce and, more importantly, royal finances were a great concern in 1626, and Richelieu's designs needed immediate support. Thus, from 2 December 1626 to 24 February 1627 an Assembly of Notables was held in Paris as a forum for debate on development and re-organization of the realm. Richelieu had many ideas based especially on the reduction of royal expenditure and the "resumption of alienated crown lands," but the dominant concern was immediate financial need, not developing a long-range economic programme.[72] Consequently, when Richelieu appeared before the Assembly, to make no mistake of the immediacy of his demands, he declared: "The King has no doubts, gentlemen, that you will do all that is required of you at this time."[73]

In addition to securing the necessary finances, Richelieu was concerned that the October edict still had not been registered in the necessary parlements; he remained challenged to win general acceptance of his motives.[74] The Assembly of Notables was a timely opportunity to secure approval by presenting a plan which could appeal to the conscience of anyone concerned with the good of the realm because it was based upon the prevailing mercantile ideas to which he owed the birth of his position. To this end, he entertained many proposals[75] and received a number of memoirs in 1626 from others pleading for a restitution of the marine.[76] Richelieu borrowed the evocative language and commercial reasoning from these appeals to back up a plan he borrowed from Du Noyer for the permanent maintenance of forty-five warships on the Atlantic and a galley fleet in the Mediterranean. As financial justification, he stressed the streamlining of finances under his future direction and the suppression of the charges of Admiralty (as he had attempted to legislate with the Edict of August 1626).

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[71] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 101-102.

[72] Bonney, King's Debts, 71; A.D. Lublinskaya, French Absolutism: the Crucial Phase, 1620-1629. Translated by Brian Pearce. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1968), 310-316.

[73] "Harangue prononcée en l'assemblée des notables tenue à Paris, le 2 décembre 1626, en présence du Roy, par M. le cardinal de Richelieu," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:303.

[74] Burckhardt, Richelieu, 31.

Support for the plan was, therefore, tacit support for his authority. Responding to financial arguments, which seemed to some degree to relieve the delegates of responsibility, and the promise of more ordered financial management of the navy in the future,[77] the Notables agreed, in principle, to support his naval programme.[78] With their endorsement of an edict registered in January 1627, Richelieu was able formally to suppress the Admiralty (along with the Constabulary). Although no financial backing was secured, Richelieu was elated,[79] for he had avoided potential opposition to his policies and was able to proceed with his military preparations against England. By appealing to the glory of the realm to improve his reception at the Assembly, he had further consolidated the power of his charge.

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[75] Hauser, Pensée économique, 54-60.

[76] See for example the Remonstrance de Provence which pleaded for royal protection from the Barbary pirates. Discussed in Lacour-Gayet, Marine militaire, 3-5.

[77] Bonney, King's Debts, 132.

[78] Lublinskaya, French Absolutism, 322-323.

[79] "A M. le commandeur. 22 mars 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:416.

Following the Assembly, the Parlement of Paris registered the edict of October 1626,[80] and Richelieu was sworn in as Grand-Master on 22 March 1627. However, the Breton Parlement registered the edict grudgingly and with many restrictions; in Brittany his powers were limited to granting clearances for overseas voyages (though this proved hard to enforce)[81] and to command of the coast guard.[82] As this left him with the authority to continue unopposed with his preparations of a military force that he could direct against England, the successful exercise of his military authority remained the most important step in defining and practically validating his charge.

On the day he was sworn in, Richelieu sent out a number of celebratory letters including one to his maternal uncle, the Commander Armador de la Porte,[83] in which he declared: "Now I will embrace affairs more diligently than ever." He announced a new contract with the Dutch for ten more ships, making provisions for the possible construction of siege works at La Rochelle and purchasing arms. He also celebrated the purchase of 300 cannons from Brittany at half the cost charged by the English, as well as the near completion of the ships he had contracted from Breton shipyards. "Finally everything is ready."[84]

In January Richelieu had drawn up his various rates for sailing clearances,[85] and he hoped immmediately to begin collection. His correspondence reveals an increased concern with the enforcement of this privilege and specifically with adjudicating claims to recent Portuguese wrecks off the coast of Guyenne. This represents his early efforts to amass a vast personal fortune from his maritime interests, as Bergin convincingly demonstrates. Yet it is only one aspect of the larger process of acquiring authority and control. By exercising the basic component of the former Admiralty (that is, the authority to grant *congés* or to adjudicate claims) with the collection of his due fees, Richelieu was legitimizing his authority at the most practical level; it was not only an affirmation of financial privilege but a conscious step toward the re-definition and exercise of maritime authority.

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[80] The provincial parlements did the same shortly thereafter.

[81] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 108.

[82] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 103.

[83] Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:416.

[84] See also "A MM. d'Espesses et de Custojoux. 22 mars 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:418.

[85] Fournier, Hydrographie, 410.

In fact, he had the opportunity to use these privileges in another capacity because of an agreement in principle of December 1626 between the Spanish and French Crowns to return recently pirated property.[86] When an agreement to co-operate against England was reached with Spain in March 1627, the Portuguese wrecks were used to nurture the delicate relationship. "The sound order [was given]...for the recovery of the debris of these carracks in favour of the interests of the King of Spain...."[87] Thus, Spain was encouraged to make good on its promise to provide naval support against England and La Rochelle. The ability to negotiate such diplomatic support was timely for Richelieu, for the first direct challenge to the maritime security of France was growing.

Despite his rhetorical claims that he was acting solely for the fiscal or commercial benefit of the realm (and any private interests in acquiring personal wealth), there is no question as to his primary emphasis or to the value that he placed on his charge. Denigrating those who opposed his plans "enemies of the King who begrudge the welfare of his state,"[88] the increasingly confident minister wrote to a correspondent at Rennes on 20 January: "As you are in Brittany, I take the pen to ask you to make the effort to see that the gentlemen of the Parlement at Rennes verify the edict of Morbihan [or the Edict of October 1626] and the power that it has pleased the King to grant me over navigation and commerce," because, he explained, "the craft of warfare is reserved to those who are deemed worthy."[89] His power was to be distinctly military with profound diplomatic implications.

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[86] Vauciennes, Mémoires des Guerres, 237.

[87] Vauciennes, Mémoires des Guerres, 251.

Prior to the Assembly of Notables, the most effective memoir that Richelieu received was from the same experienced sea-captain who had earlier provided the substance of the *Règlement de 1625*, Isaac de Razilly. In this appeal, Razilly pleaded for a general revitalization of the marine and for a permanent fleet based at Le Havre that would make "the King master of the sea and universally dreaded." Ultimately, his memoir outlined an elaborate colonial and commercial programme which would justify itself by assuring a flow of gold and silver into the realm. Although Richelieu recognized the utility of Razilly's reasoning, he did not extend his personal enthusiasm to all aspects of the proposal. He found such suggestions as encouraging the colonization of Canada and spreading French influence in Africa less pressing. Moreover, he discouraged actively Razilly's specific South American proposal "not wanting lightly to give counsel to the King to risk his vessels...."[90] In practice, Richelieu distilled only those aspects of Razilly's proposal that improved his reception at the Assembly and those that immediately increased his military authority.

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[88] "A Messrs de Saint-Mallo. 20 février 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:381.

[89] "A M. de Machault. 20 janvier 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:346.

One such aspect was Razilly's emphasis on a "new invention" that was the "quintessence of the sea." He was referring to a recent development in the casting of reliable iron cannon.[91] In 1626 an English gun foundry produced a much lighter cast-iron gun of the same durability as the expensive but traditionally lighter, stronger bronze-cast guns.[92] Smaller ships now could carry the effective fire-power previously reserved for large vessels, Razilly explained. This was an important development; by mid-century it was commonplace for European warships to be outfitted with cast-iron cannon. Recognizing the value of this advance, Razilly stressed "building as many vessels as possible" and establishing cannon foundries at Brest and at Le Havre. Richelieu was not one to miss the significance of such developments either nor to ignore a suggestion that could put the "quintessence" of sea power in his hands.

Early in 1627, just months after receiving the memoir, Richelieu established cannon foundries at Le Havre and at Brouage where he was also governor (but not at Brest as it had been suggested). This he did to "found as many iron and bronze cannon as he could."[93] If Richelieu's attempt to build a royal armament industry was "timid" or "modest,"[94] as has been claimed, his intention certainly was not. Richelieu wanted to create a powerful military force out of the navy under the authority granted to him by the Crown, and he made an appropriately strong symbolic gesture. On 26 April 1627 he declared: "to keep cannons made for use on the sea from being employed in other ways...the expressed power of his Majesty" would be displayed with his arms and the warning *Ratio Ultima Regum*. Equally, alongside was to be an anchor with "Cardinal de Richelieu" engraved overtop.[95] In this symbolic juxtaposition of the actual physical instrument of strength and quintessential component of sea power generally, Richelieu provided a powerful statement about his role. By elevating maritime authority beyond the theoretical bounds of the old Admiralty, he could share with the King the pursuit of glory and honour by exercising it in his name. In other words he was beginning to see himself as the maritime extension of the King.

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[90] La Roncière, La marine française, 4:490; see also "A Monsieur Monsieur le chevalier de Razilly, 10 décembre 1626," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:304-305.

[91] It was not cannon of "fonte verte," or of bronze casting as Boiteux suggests. Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 168.

[92] Cipolla, Guns and Sails in the Early Phase of European Expansion, 1400-1700 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 48-50, 65.

[93] Fournier, Hydrographie, 346.

It has been suggested that Richelieu's policies, which appeared in the Assembly of Notables to be based on peace and internal reform, changed due to "the pressure of circumstances that [he] was unable to avert." Yet this accepts too readily his rhetoric and obscures what in many ways was a consistent naval programme--his own political aggrandizement through the exercise of military authority. Similarly, to claim that "the only object of naval supremacy [is] to protect commerce on the high seas"[96] is not sensitive to Richelieu's motives. By actively seeking to create a royal fleet to counter a potential threat posed by the English, which presumably would be coupled with a rebellion at La Rochelle, he was consolidating firmly his power. Commercial growth, financial reform or even the long-term development of a royal French naval programme were not his actual aims. In fact, despite his elaborate proposals and the variety of justifications, he claimed that his financial requests were sound, "especially for those who value one ounce of well-earned glory from some distinguished action over all the goods of the world."[97]

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[94] Cipolla, Guns and Sails, 67.

[95] "A M. d'Espessess. 26 avril 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:440.

[96] Tapié, France in the Age of Louis XIII, 180.

In other words, Richelieu had little financial understanding or sophistication. For him, meeting immediate financial needs was what mattered. Consequently, to Guron, encouraging the defence of Oléron and Brouage from English attack, he assured him: "The money will not be lacking, God willing; because we will borrow from all sides in an affair of such importance to the welfare and the service of the King...."[98] From Richelieu's perspective, the purpose of the development of French sea power was a personal political attempt to defeat his political opponents and win the King's confidence through glorious action against a foreign state, not simply a selfless and practical defence of the coast or visionary hope for commercial or colonial greatness.

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[97] "Propositions qui doibvent estre faictes de la part du Roy à l'assemblée des notables, en 1626. Fin de 1626," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:333.

[98] "A Monsieur Monsieur de Guron, gouverneur pour le Roi à Maran. 3 mars 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:396.

CHAPTER 2

FIRST CHALLENGES CONFRONTED, 1627-1635

As Richelieu had been expecting, the military opportunity needed to exercise and legitimize his power soon presented itself. On 20 July 1627 an English fleet of more than sixty ships appeared off the island of Ré.[1] The Duke of Buckingham, who led the force, expected to support a Huguenot uprising and then to continue against Bordeaux.[2] However, the citizens of La Rochelle were not yet all prepared for open revolt. Moreover the governor of the island, the marquis de Toiras, offered surprisingly effective resistance. After a brief struggle he withdrew his forces to the fort of La Prée and the citadel of St. Martin.[3] The English encircled the island, blocked up the harbour with logs and chains and arrived to besiege St. Martin on 27 July.

The preparations Richelieu had undertaken in 1626-1627 had been in anticipation of such an attack. Indeed, plans had gone so far as to choose locations for a counter Franco-Spanish invasion of England. Of immediate concern, however, had been the hurried acquisition of an effective naval force. In addition to the contracted Dutch ships (which Richelieu expected soon to arrive), he had named *provéditeurs*, or special commissioners, to survey French shipyards and to negotiate the purchase of ships from private merchants. He had delegated the authority to oversee all aspects of construction, arming and outfitting, including the responsibility to make all financial arrangements. His emphasis was clear, pleading for his representatives to "hurry."[4] Increasingly, Richelieu grew impatient and was resolved "to take revenge if we are attacked, in every way possible."

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[1] Tapié, France in the Age of Louis XIII, 180.

[2] La Roncière, Marine française, 4:508.

[3] George A. Rothrock, The Huguenots: A Biography of a Minority (Chicago: Nelson-Hall, Inc., 1979), 137.

The officer in charge at St. Malo encountered tremendous resistance to perceived royal intrusion with the order to have twelve more ships constructed for purchase.[5] He was instructed finally to get whatever he could at whatever price, as long as the vessels came well armed with cannon.[6] Richelieu instructed another officer: "have me built only twenty large barques, after which, we can make twenty more;...we must experiment in order to succeed...[but] do not lose any more time; so long as the ships are large, they will serve well."[7] With the actual invasion of Ré, Richelieu was emphatic: he implored his officers, "in God's name, [proceed] without a minute to lose."[8]

With Louis ill, Richelieu chose initially to conceal the news of the invasion and to exercise all of the authority invested in his new title. According to La Roncière, "Richelieu had never felt more the weight of responsibility."[9] Indeed, he was eagerly and ambitiously exploiting the opportunity to exercise this responsibility which he had defined for himself. Following the advice of Razilly's brother, Claude de Launay-Razilly, Richelieu was gathering his fleet at Blavet in preparation for an attack on the invading English fleet. The day after the invasion a representative was sent to Spain to request immediate naval reinforcement for Guise, the Admiral of the Levant, who was to command the forces gathering at Blavet (this time under the royal colours of France).[10] Richelieu's hope to strengthen his charge rested on the success of this fleet and its ability to impress Louis. Accordingly, he told Guise, "I have assured His Majesty that by the twentieth he will witness what he desires." Richelieu was clear that he wanted Guise to strike the fatal blow, claiming, "the King beseeches you to finish this affair."[11]

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[4] "A M. le chevalier de Rasilly. Paris, 1er décembre 1626," Grillon, Papiers de Richelieu, 1:555.

[5] "A Mrs de Manty, de Poincy et de Beaulieu. 23 février 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:385.

[6] "A M. Destourelles. 22 mars 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:420.

[7] "A M. de Marsillac. 22 octobre 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:676.

[8] "A M. le commandeur. 30 juillet 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:524.

Louis' illness did not weaken his resolve to break Huguenot rebellion in France. On 5 August 1627 he issued a proclamation against the city and mobilized his armies, and the Rochelais were pushed into open revolt by September.[12] In his place the King sent the duc d'Angoulême to lead the forces. This emphasis on the military reduction of the city (led by a powerful noble and former ally of La Vieuville)[13] was a direct threat to Richelieu's designs. In response, he presented a memoir to the King ten days later, on 15 August, in which he pleaded for a continued emphasis on naval preparations. Richelieu repeated many of arguments he had used at the Assembly of Notables and called for a programme encouraging native ship-building. "Experience proves that if we do not consider our long-term designs when we are at the point of their execution we find ourselves short." If nothing is done, he warned Louis, "we must...concede completely to the English and the Dutch."[14]

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[9] La Roncière, Marine française, 4:509.

[10] Fournier, Hydrographie, 346.

[11] "A M. de Guise. 11 octobre 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:658.

[12] Rothrock, Huguenots, 138.

[13] Bergin, Rise of Richelieu, 254.

Yet Richelieu had far more immediate concerns. He did not want his naval efforts to be overshadowed by military operations; thus, he did not want the Crown's support to be weakened, thereby threatening the fleet's effectiveness. In the memoir, he lobbied for financial support from the King, blaming the malice of others for any weakness in his preparations that Louis might witness: "the multitude and malice of the officers ruin and belabour all sorts of affairs, particularly those of finance."[15] In other words, in addition to a free hand, he wanted to ensure that finances would not be diverted from his naval plans. To undertake any initiative to free money to help officers with the "expenditures that they have to make," was the purpose of the memo. If this could not be done, he was clear that he "would not accept the duty of preparing this armament, and would be free of the blame that otherwise would be deserved if he undertook it without being prepared." Richelieu wanted effectively to counter the English in 1627 and also into 1628, and he said to Louis: "when all is done, we can return completely to the ordinary procedures if we want." Such was the extent of his long-range plans for reform in the summer of 1627.

In addition to the fleet at Blavet, Richelieu had ordered a second naval force, supported by a general mobilization of all other sundry vessels of any description along the Atlantic coast, to gather at Sables d'Olonne[16] to attempt to transport supplies to St. Martin.[17] In September many attempts at such relief were made, but Rochelais interference and the open co-operation of Mayor Jean Guiton's Huguenot forces with Buckingham's were increasingly troublesome. Ré was on the point of capitulation; however, on the evening of 8 October an expedition from Sables d'Olonne under the marquis de Brézé cut through the English blockade and provided timely relief to the besieged.[18]

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[14] "Mémoire pour faire voir au Roy que, si l'on procède comme on l'a fait jusqu'ici, on ne pourra avoir des vaisseaux pour l'année prochaine. 15 aoôt 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:561-562.

[15] Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:562.

Valuable time had been won, yet Guise's fleet still was waiting for the arrival of the Dutch-built ships.[19] In contradiction to the recent memo to the King, Richelieu's correspondence implies a casual acceptance of this foreign dependence, revealing only the immediate "concern we have that the Dutch might conspire with the English. Hence, we have judged it more appropriate that the vessels to be sent to Toiras are captained by the King's subjects."[20] This fear proved to be well founded, for on 7 October the English attacked the Dutch ship-yard at Texel and little was done in response; some of the Dutch even refused to co-operate with the French envoy, Des Gouttes, who managed to save only one of the contracted warships and three smaller boats from being taken by the English.[21] When the Spanish support arrived too late and ill-prepared, reflecting Spain's uneasiness with allying with France,[22] a new approach was necessary.

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[16] "A M. de Manty. 30 juillet 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:521-523.

[17] It was Richelieu's emphasis on acquiring smaller vessels for this secondary mission (Mercure françois, 14:6) that has led to the misconception that generally Richelieu preferred small mobile ships for the marine (La Roncière, Marine française, 4:493). Indeed, as the importance to him of *La Couronne* suggests, quite the opposite was true. He wanted his naval forces to be impressive.

[18] Fournier, Hydrographie, 448.

[19] Guise's force had twenty-five vessels, of which only eight or nine he considered "reasonable." Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 55.

[20] "A MM. d'Espesses et de Custojoux. 22 mars 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:418.

As suggested by his ally from the Chalais conspiracy, Valençay (the second-in-command to Guise), Richelieu now turned to a more traditional tactic and pressed forward the plan to transport army troops to the island. Since his naval plans were faltering, Richelieu could not remain distanced from the King's enthusiastic emphasis on an amphibious landing on Ré, for which he involved himself personally in the planning.[23] On 30 October some forces landed and relieved La Prée. More significantly, on 8 November a convoy from Sables d'Olonne broke the English blockade and landed troops and supplies which allowed maréschal de Schomberg's rout of the English. Defeated, the English withdrew with heavy losses and set sail on 17 November. Because he had put himself in a position to benefit from a strictly naval victory, Richelieu was not entirely satisfied with the means by which the victory had been achieved. Indeed, the hopes Richelieu tied to his naval designs would have been crushed entirely but for storms at sea which caused great damage to the English and prevented an attack on Guise's assembled forces at Blavet.

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[21] Mercure françois, 14:155; La Roncière, Marine française, 4:525.

[22] Le Mercure françois, 14:418; La Roncière, Marine française, 4:524.

[23] Mercure françois, 14:10; Moote, Louis XIII: The Just, 196.

In the aftermath, Richelieu attributed the English invasion not to a weakness in the navy that he had assembled but to a breakdown in the authority that he had defined for himself with the 1626 edicts. In his defence, he complained that he had been prevented from exercising efficiently his authority so as to check English pretensions:

> The delays and hindrances brought...to the verification of my edicts have not allowed me to adopt methods by which I easily would have blocked the invasion of the English, and I have been constrained, by these refusals and delays, to see them occupy the island of Ré and gain a springboard for even greater enterprises against [the] state....I wish no longer to hear...of any conditions which contradict my authority....[24]

As rebels against the authority of the Crown, the Huguenots were the target of the King's anger; for Richelieu there had been no corresponding resolve from the outset of his career to break the Huguenots, as claimed in the *Testament Politique*. Indeed, earlier in the year, at a moment when the English threat appeared weaker to Richelieu than he had thought,[25] his temporary relief revealed no real concern with military operations against La Rochelle. Rather, his original pre-occupation with naval affairs remained paramount. He had even felt that, "If we can safely win the sea captains who have served Soubise...it would be propitious to employ them."[26] He repeatedly assured the citizens of La Rochelle that he wished only to protect them from the English. Of course, with this he was not being generous; he meant protection from their potential for disobedience in co-operation with the English, not protection from a direct English attack: "We do not wish to do them any harm, but only to prevent them from causing any."[27] Nevertheless, in Richelieu's mind, the defeat of La Rochelle the next year was just a necessary extension of his personal struggle to win the King's attention to the effort that he had been directing against England with his naval efforts.

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[24] "Lettre du Roi. Suscription: A Monsieur Molé, mon procureur général. 15 novembre 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:720; Avenel suggests that this letter was either dictated by Richelieu or, at least, inspired by him. Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 718, n. 2.

[25] "A Monsieur Monsieur de Guron, gouverneur pour le Roi à Marans. 3 mars 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:394.

[26] "A Monsieur Monsieur de Guron, gouverneur pour le Roy à Marans. 28 mars 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:424.

Late in August the King arrived at La Rochelle to lead his armies personally.[28] Politically, Richelieu had no choice but to accept this additional military aspect of the affair. On 30 August he suggested to Angoulême, "If the island of Ré is lost, which we must avoid by all means, nothing could make it up but the gain of La Rochelle." In addition to defeating the invading English navy, Richelieu now saw the political necessity of complementing a land siege of La Rochelle with a naval victory so that "the English will not be able to help [the Rochelais]."[29] By 6 October Richelieu declared his resolution to defeat the rebels. "We must break the Huguenots," he explained, "otherwise, the English and Rochelais will be united and powerful." Yet Richelieu did not lose the hope of winning advantage from a naval victory against England. "Whether Ré is saved or lost," he declared, "it is necessary to take the war to England...!"[30]

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[27] "A M. le commandeur. 27 febvrier 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:391; "What His Majesty is doing is not intended to hurt them, but only to keep from being hurt." "A M. de Navailles. 16 febvrier 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:374.

[28] Rothrock, Huguenots, 138.

[29] "A M. d'Angoulême. 30 août 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:574-575.

Thus he was determined, after the inauspicious showing of his fleet at the recapture of Ré, to have the navy play an important role in the siege. On 23 November Richelieu ordered the fleet at Blavet to the island "to complete by sea what had been begun by land...."[31] And, from his determination for personal success in his capacity as Grand-Master, he oversaw the construction of the monumental dike across the harbour to isolate and starve the Rochelais into submission. He requested, from all along the Atlantic coast, "all the old hulks of ships" to be patched and brought to La Rochelle.[32] There they were to be sunk along a growing wall of piled stone and masonry as a foundation. At 4500 feet in length (with a fifty foot base) and defended with artillery, the dike was "one of the most impressive accomplishments of early seventeenth-century military engineering."[33] By January 1628, after six months of work, the dike took shape. Of course, Richelieu also took great personal care with the readiness of his fleet.[34] Thus, together with whatever vessels could be acquired, the royal fleet of thirteen warships now under the command of Valençay,[35] guarded the narrow passage which had to be left in the dike for the exit of the river and the passage of the tides, completing the blockade around the city so as to prevent any relief efforts or reprisals by the English from the sea.

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[30] "Résolution. 6 octobre 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:648.

[31] "A M. de Guise. 23 novembre 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:729-730.

[32] "A M. de Marsillac. 10 octobre 1627," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 2:654.

[33] Rothrock, Huguenots, 139.

[34] La Roncière, Marine française, 4:548.

[35] The duc de Guise had just resigned the command to Valençay because the royal fleet "was not worthy of him." La Roncière, Marine française, 4:544.

On 11 May 1628 an attempt to break the naval blockade was made by a poorly prepared English fleet.[36] But when this force saw the hopelessness of its prospects, it turned back for England on 19 May.[37] Meanwhile, the Rochelais suffered miserably, with death rates reaching more than 400 per day.[38] On 28 September another English fleet provided their last hope.

This time the English attempted to do battle, but after a few relatively harmless exchanges the French fleet managed to dissuade them from a dangerous commitment; the stand-off led to negotiations among the three parties.[39] Although Rohan continued with campaigns against the Crown in the south of France[40], the capitulation of La Rochelle days later stands as a major achievement in the career of Cardinal Richelieu. As La Roncière points out, however, from a strictly military view, "the truly vanquished were the English," for it was the service of the French fleet that sealed the victory.[41] More important to Richelieu than the English was the vindication of his policies with a victory that he could claim personally throught the exercise of the authority of the Grand-Mastership.

Boiteux claims that throughout his ministry Richelieu tried to maintain peaceful relations with England and to focus on more important continental matters. Yet, to this point hostilities with England had been his greatest preoccupation. Peace was signed with England on 24 April 1629, but it was difficult to maintain for Richelieu, who only now wished for good relations and the prevention of an Anglo-Spanish alliance.[42] The English continued to capture French merchant vessels at sea, and aggression spread overseas with the result that on 19 July the small Canadian fortress of Quebec capitulated to English forces.

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[36] La Roncière, Marine française, 4:543.

[37] "A la Reine Mère. [20 mai 1628]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:113.

[38] Rothrock, Huguenots, 142.

[39] Tapié, France in the Age of Louis XIII, 189.

[40] Ended only by 1629 with the Peace of Alais.

[41] La Roncière, Marine française, 4:555.

Richelieu demanded the return of the merchant vessels taken by the English and an agreement by which this sort of disruption would end. He also wanted the vessels taken from the Dutch ship-yard at Texel and the restitution of Quebec.[43] Caution was the order, however, for antagonizing the English no longer offered any opportunity to Richelieu. To an envoy in London he advised: "if you are unable to reach a general commercial agreement, it would be preferable to avoid it and even to avoid the conference because it could not result in anything but resentment and rupture of the peace...."[44] The degree to which he was influenced by the value of the demands does not obscure his greater concern for a mutually respectful ceasefire.[45]

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[42] "A M. Chateauneuf. 28 octobre 1629," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:455.

[43] "Instruction baillée à M. de Fontenay-Mareuil, s'en allant ambassadeur extraordinaire en Angleterre. 27 janvier 1630," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:522.

[44] "A M. de Chateauneuf. 3 décembre 1629," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:478.

[45] Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:455.

Immediately upon hearing of the loss of Quebec,[46] Richelieu asked the French ambassador in England to take "particular care with the affair of Canada." Yet of purely diplomatic concerns, Richelieu instructed his ambassador, "If they offer you the pure and simple restitution of Quebec, take it; if not it would be preferable to extend the affair."[47] He did not wish to antagonize the English, a task made difficult by the arrival in London of the exaggerated news of a French captain attacking and brutally killing English colonists in the Antilles.[48]

Richelieu's attitude to England after 1628 was not entirely diffident, however. He was unwilling to concede matters of symbolic significance derogatory to the respect he felt he had earned with his victory. Although he was willing to forgo a commercial agreement, the English affair had assaulted his developing sense of jurisdiction. English attacks on French merchant vessels "were fine during the war that we had with them, but in times of peace, [the King of England] may make laws only for his subjects." Richelieu wished for French vessels no longer to salute their English counterparts at sea. More emphatically, he refused to return the English ensigns taken at Ré in exchange for Toiras' vessels. To this "His Majesty could not consent, having won them, as he had, with the blood of his soldiers."[49] Richelieu maintained this delicate *modus*

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[46] Richelieu had not heard of the details of the loss of Quebec as late as 28 October 1629. "A M. de Chateauneuf. 28 octobre 1629," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:455.

[47] Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:478.

[48] "A M. de Chateauneuf. 9 octobre 1629," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:446; Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:454, 455.

[49] "Instruction baillée à M. de Fontenay-Mareuil, s'en allant ambassadeur extraordinaire en Angleterre. 27 janvier 1630," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:521.

vivendi as late as 1632 when, by the treaty of St. Germain, Canada formally was returned in exchange for the remainder of Henriette-Marie's dowry.

Even in 1628, however, Richelieu's attention quickly focussed on affairs far more important to him than England, and he was eager to finish with the current troubles with La Rochelle as a necessary step before proceeding to other important matters.[50] More important to him than working out a settlement with the English was the immediate articulation of a foreign policy that would begin to distance him from the *dévot* line of co-operation with Spain. By focussing on relieving the "oppression inflicted by the Spanish"[51] in Italy he hoped to distinguish himself politically and ally himself with the King. Appropriately, as soon after the fall of La Rochelle as December 1628, Richelieu appealed to the King, "turn your thoughts, and your arms, away from [the troubles with La Rochelle]."[52]

In the *Avis au Roi* of 13 January 1629, Richelieu offered his reflections on the prospects of making Louis "the most powerful monarch in the world." In the *Avis*, which included an emphasis on the navy, Richelieu began consistently to stress the need to counter the threat from Spain, a policy to which he now tied the hopes of continuing his dramatic rise in influence. The affair at La Rochelle had revealed the importance of naval strength, he claimed, and now, "We must have a perpetual design to arrest the progress of Spain....To this end, the first consideration is to become powerful on the sea...."[53]

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[50] "Advis que le cardinal donna au Roy, à son retour de Paris à La Rochelle. [Vers le 20 avril 1628]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:88.

[51] Bibiliothèque Nationale, Cinq Cents de Colbert, vol. 301, fol. 1.

[52] "A Monsieur. [Vers la fin novembre 1628]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:151.

However, this statement alone is not an entirely satisfactory encapsulation of his naval policy, as the historian Etienne Taillemite suggests.[54] In the *Avis* the desire to become powerful at sea as a goal in itself, and the desire to set up a naval infrastructure to maintain permanently a strong fleet was not present, nor was the recognition that any such development had begun. Yet there was exuberance, and celebration of his own "extreme care and diligence"[55] which had produced the recent naval victory. The siege of La Rochelle had enhanced Richelieu's political standing tremendously. Although previously La Vieuville had been styled "principal minister of France," only now in 1629 did Richelieu enjoy this designation.[56] His naval policy, such as it was, is better reflected in the following line from the *Avis*: "I swear that the honour that it has pleased the King to give, by employing me, has allowed me to acquire this reputation in the world: that the *grands*, the parlements, the communities, subjects and foreigners hold me in consideration, love or esteem."[57] In other words, it was his growing authority and prestige that interested Richelieu, and Italy held even greater promise than England or La Rochelle.

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[53] "Advis donné au Roy après la prise de La Rochelle, pour le bien de ses affaires. [13 janvier 1629]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:181.

[54] Taillemite, Histoire ignorée, 51.

[55] "Relation de la réduction de La Rochelle, pour l'envoyer aux païs estrangers. [Commencement de novembre 1628]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:142.

[56] Elliott, Olivares, 50.

[57] "Advis au Roy après la prise de La Rochelle, pour le bien de ses affaires. [13 janvier 1629]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:208.

In his attempt to win a "spectacular success" of his own, Richelieu's Spanish counterpart, Olivares, beseiged Casale in 1628, hoping that the La Rochelle affair would keep France from interfering in this consolidation of Spanish influence in Northern Italy. In response, Richelieu hoped to use his newly "enhanced authority" to resume an emphasis on Italy by defending the French duc de Nevers' claim to Mantua and Montferrat and to push for immediate involvement, specifically for the relief of Casale.[58]

Early in March 1629 Charles Emmanuel of Savoy lost to the French forces at Susa, allowing their transit into Italy, and by the end of the month the Spanish siege at Casale was lifted. The swiftness and decisiveness of this victory was critical for Richelieu's political programme, for *dévot* opposition to an aggressive anti-Spanish policy remained strong and was led by many among the high nobility including the Queen Mother, upon whom he had been depending for support.[59] In his attempt to win fully the King's support in this way, he was isolating himself politically.

In the years following the Assembly of Notables of 1626-1627 financial reform of the realm remained an important political issue. Of those who had spoken "demonstrating the commitment of the ministers" (Richelieu, Michel de Marillac, Schomberg and the marquis d'Effiat), it was Marillac and Effiat who continued to press for reform.[60] Just three days after Richelieu offered his *Avis* of January 1629 to the King, a monumental ordonnance, called the Code Michaud after its principal author, Marillac, was presented to the Parlement of Paris for registration. This was the only ordonnance in the reign of Louis XIII with comprehensive administrative reforms; it was "a real attempt to regulate the internal affairs of the realm."[61] Although the genuinely reformist Code in which thirty-seven articles were concerned with creating a sound maritime legacy for France reflects closely the previously stated principles of the Cardinal at the Assembly of Notables,[62] Richelieu himself discouraged its acceptance and opposed its registration with a *lit de justice*. And after Marillac's later disgrace in 1630, he did nothing to enforce its principles.[63] Considering his personal agenda as reflected in his naval policies it is not surprising that he could not have approved of the Code. Its registration would have changed little, but, more significantly, it had been created by Marillac and the powerful *dévots* who quickly were becoming his enemies. They were obstacles in Richelieu's designs to pursue the ambitions that he had proposed in the *Avis* to cultivate a close association with the King.

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[58] Elliott, Olivares, 96-97.

[59] Georges Pagès, "Autour du grand orage Richelieu et Marillac: Deux politiques," Révue historique 179 (January-June, 1937), 63-97.

[60] Bonney, King's Debts, 133-139.

According to Marillac's programme, participation in naval affairs would be encouraged by the possibility of ennoblement and an interdiction against working for foreign states. This would be supported by a programme of education and professional training for officers, sailors and especially for qualified cannoneers. More precise logs of every voyage would be kept "to know and judge any advantage that could be gained from their navigation." Specifically, each ship would be inspected and individually administered by a special commissioner accountable to a justice of the marine. In addition, to promote the defensive capability of coastal areas, billeting would be curtailed; and experts would ensure appropriate standards for ships constructed in France.[64]

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[61] Tapié, France in the Age of Louis XIII, 197.

[62] J. Michael Hayden, France and the Estates-General of 1614 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 215.

[63] Pagès, Monarchie d'Ancien Régime, 104.

Also, beside the assurance that no illegal levies of money would be raised, and certain other protective regulations of commercial affairs, there is an emphasis on using warships to protect merchant convoys. Significantly, however, merchants also were "to construct, arm, and equip...and...to offer similar treatment as they receive from [foreigners at sea]."[65] Thus, effectively it did little more than re-define the commercial *status quo* as reflected in the older 1584 edict.

Moreover, the Code offered little financial protection for the Crown or for Richelieu personally. Like the ostensible purpose of Richelieu's Edict of October 1626, the Code's purpose was to protect French merchants. For claims to shipwrecks, as an example, it seems to have been hopelessly impracticable. Traditionally, a shipwreck or anything lost at sea was viewed as common property and could give occasion to scenes of savage looting.[66] This was the situation which the Code vainly attempted to rectify. Hoping to keep town governors and other officials from illegally claiming property, its purpose was to ensure that "those whose vessels are lost at sea are not deprived of whatever can be recovered from their wreck." Nothing in the Code protected the right of the Crown to any part of a shipwreck. Thus, considering the financial benefit and the diplomatic leverage which Richelieu's privileges already had afforded him, such regulation was excessive and burdensome.

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[64] Isambert, Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises, nos. 431, 433-436, 438-440, 452-453, 456-457, 459.

[65] Isambert, Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises, nos. 429, 432, 443-446, 454-457.

[66] Avenel, Monarchie Absolue, 193.

Most offensive to Richelieu, however, was the attempt to define his charge with the Code. With the advice of "our very dear and respected cousin the Cardinal de Richelieu," the Code included the familiar recommendation that, "henceforth and for always, there will be supported by us and our succeeding kings, fifty vessels of four and five hundred tons, armed and equipped for war...." Succinctly asserted is the requirement that every vessel required a sailing *congé* from the Cardinal. Further, "It is forbidden of all lords and gentlemen...to consider or title themselves admiral or vice-admiral in their domains, lands and governments." Moreover, within three months, anyone claiming privilege over shipwrecks, *congés*, or otherwise had to have his claims verified.[67] Although these provisions clearly reflect his demonstrated emphases, Richelieu was exercising already the defined privileges and did not need them codified in this way. Not only was the Code backed by his potential political enemies to whom he wished to extend no legitimacy, it would have limited his authority, for his designs went well beyond what the Code would have allowed.

For example, the Code addressed the inefficient administration and poor condition of French ports. Richelieu, as Grand-Master, was to conduct a large-scale survey of each port, report on their upkeep so that repairs and general maintenance could be undertaken and also to undertake a yearly inventory of personnel, ships and munitions.[68] However, in defining his extensive maritime powers to this point, Richelieu had done far more at French ports than perform administrative tasks such as this. He acquired formal governorships with the intention of developing and fortifying them under his authority.[69] In this way, he defined his own powers and did so far more extensively than Marillac was suggesting.

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[67] Isambert, Recueil général des anciennes lois françaises, nos. 430, 448-451, 455.

[68] Isambert, Recueil générale des anciennes lois françaises, no. 441.

In addition to Le Havre and Brouage, Richelieu also acquired the governorship of Oléron. Unsatisfied, he pressured Toiras to relinquish Ré, Aunis and La Rochelle (which Richelieu obtained by December 1630).[70] But the governorships alone did not provide sufficient political independence and opportunity. Previously, Richelieu had depended on Marie de Medici's patronage. At Brouage, for example, he had been acting as governor only under her legal title. Similarly, Richelieu had overseen her maritime interests throughout her extensive domains in Brittany. Although this represents only relatively tenuous claims in a rather politically hostile province, Richelieu turned the situation to his advantage. In 1627 Thémines died, and in 1630 Marie was offered the vacant governorship. Increasingly, Richelieu had been distancing himself from Marie and the *dévots* (such as Marillac) and allying himself with the King. By 11 November 1630, in the famous political showdown known as the Day of the Dupes, Louis chose to support Richelieu and his policies over his mother and the *dévots*. Richelieu no longer was dependent on her patronage. He accepted the governorship of Brittany in her stead, and by 1631 he also was created governor of Nantes, which he had been coveting. According to Bergin's study, "every important governorship in the maritime provinces of France from lower Normandy to the proximity of the Gironde was in his hands" or in the hands of family members.[71] Richelieu's extensive governorships were far more effective assurances of his influence and political independence than anything defined in an impracticably broad codification of maritime law; and competing claimants subsequently would receive his personal attention.

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[69] La Roncière, Marine française, 4:615, 620.

[70] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 86.

[71] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 87-88.

In December 1628, before the appearance of the Code Michaud, Louis granted Richelieu, "for life," the important "anchorage fees from all the ports and harbours of the kingdom, to whatever sum they amount, and permitted him to have them collected by whomever he saw fit."[72] Such collection of anchorage fees was not to be included in the maritime reforms of the Code; but on 23 May 1629 Louis ordered Richelieu to enforce "obedience" as defined by "one of the most ancient rights of Admiralty," that being "the right to charge foreign vessels anchorage fees."[73] Accordingly, on 31 May from Privas, where royal forces had come to put down Huguenot rebellion in Languedoc, Richelieu ordered his officers to make widely known the King's will to levy anchorage fees on foreign vessels in every port and harbour of France.

That day he undertook a project which would protect his interests and rivalled the Code Michaud in its extensiveness; with a broad mandate, he commissioned Louis LeRoux d'Infreville to conduct a massive project along the entire Atlantic coastline. Richelieu prefaced his order with the hope that with peace between France and England "trade will be free," and that merchants "will be able to set sail and navigate with full assurance" protected by the King's warships. Ultimately, the special commission was to help "establish such order" that Louis would be able "to bring to reason anyone who would conspire against his state" and to keep his subjects "free of the fear of being overcharged with claims and taxes by tax farmers and receivers who would collect more than their due or of being harassed by pirates and corsairs who have been afflicting them of late."[74]

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[72] Fournier, Hydrographie, 346-347.

[73] "Voyage et inspection maritime de M. d'Infreville sur les côtes Françaises de l'océan," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 3:171.

The details of Infreville's commission, however, give a much clearer impression of Richelieu's real emphases concerning the marine in the early months of 1629. Assuring that the King's lawful "anchorage rights" were more or less uniformly enforced along the Atlantic was only one of twelve specific assignments which Richelieu gave Infreville. He was also to report on all the different local traditions of fee collection and taxation. This included a report on the ports themselves--their condition, who was financing them and how. Also he was to forbid all remaining claims to privileges related to the legally defunct Admiralty. Generally, he was to see "that the ordonnances of the King concerning the marine are observed." Thus, the Cardinal's commissioner was authorized to fill each empty administrative position which he discovered.[75]

Infreville was to report on whether or not the *congé* of the Cardinal was being respected. Any place where it was not, he was to appoint new commissioners. At the same time he was to receipt all money and everything from the sea that had been collected for Richelieu, apportion a due finder's fee and establish the regulations for such collections in the future.[76]

In addition to such administrative assignments,

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[74] "Voyage...de M. d'Infreville," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 3:174.

[75] "Voyage...de M. d'Infreville," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 3:190, 195, 198, 219.

[76] "Voyage...de M. d'Infreville," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 3:182-183.

Infreville had significant military concerns as well. Since the weakness of the French navy had been made clear at Ré, Richelieu wanted to know specifically just what was available for use in the King's service. Infreville was told to identify whatever vessels were "useless to the King" and to "sell them outright."[77] He was to inventory every arsenal to determine what now was needed in terms of "cannon, shot and other war munitions," and to "investigate where cannon are being founded, press the contractor to make his quota...and to test them." Since prior to the English invasion of Ré, Richelieu's *provéditeurs* had been pressed to contract and oversee the construction and arming of ships without regard to market value,[78] Richelieu now wanted to know what that process had cost in order to settle these accounts and also to know "the cost that will be incurred in the future for the ships still under construction."[79]

Accordingly, he wanted Infreville to report on how many and "which vessels belong to His Majesty, where they are and in what condition, who commands them, and where others are being built." He was to settle the accounts of the *provéditeurs* of 1626 and to "receive any [others] which may be found ready to put to sea." Some ships from around St. Jean-de-Luz were expected to be ready. These he was to take to Brouage and to arm them on the way with iron cannon which had been negotiated with a private foundry at Bordeaux. Infreville was to make sure that at times of peace watches were being kept at sea and that for times of war there would be an adequate coast guard. As he travelled, he was to note the number of men (sailors, officers, carpenters or otherwise) capable of serving the King and to investigate "precisely the privately owned vessels that could be useful in time of war."[80]

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[77] "Voyage...de M. d'Infreville," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 3:213.

[78] Boiteux, Grand Maître, 58.

[79] "Voyage...de M. d'Infreville," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 3:207, 209.

Infreville's report on his mission was completed on 23 March 1631, and it was not encouraging. For example, despite six days of carefully studying the accounts of the *provéditeur* in Brittany, Infreville was unable to make sense of the contracts for the ships to be constructed. He found them utterly "confused" and neglected. Equally, he revealed a critical military weakness along the Atlantic coast of France. At Brest, for example, a harbour which he suggested was "a place especially suited for the navy," Infreville visited an old arsenal "at present in ruins, with nothing left but four walls built for Francis I."[81]

In February 1631 Richelieu had been accorded another significant addition to his authority. Henceforth, he held explicitly "the right to nominate, subject to royal approval, all officials of the marine...."[82] More must be considered than the "massive annual income" which this represents, for immediately he nurtured physical control of a military navy. Within a month of receiving Infreville's discouraging report, Richelieu prepared the *Règlement sur le fait de la marine* of 1631. This document represents Richelieu's only serious attempt at administrative reform specifically redressing the military weakness of maritime France.

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[80] "Voyage...de M. d'Infreville," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 3:206, 214.

[81] "Voyage ... de M. d'Infreville," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 3:204, 210; as a result, Richelieu no longer relied on *provéditeurs*. Henceforth, the king would entertain private bids and contract the lowest offer, the king furnishing the masts, fittings, painting or varnishing, and furnishings. Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 59.

[82] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 97.

With Brittany now firmly under his control, Richelieu formalized the traditional division of squadrons: Normandy, Brittany, and Guyenne. "The King, having learned from experience that the vessels and crews that he had constructed and prepared to keep his state safe...have not been maintained as he has ordered...," decided that they should all be assembled permanently at Le Havre and Brest. But to keep control of the Guyenne squadron away from his powerful adversary the duc d'Épernon, the governor of Guyenne, he had it based at Brouage in upper Saintonge. Three corresponding *commissaires généraux de la marine*, whose responsibilities would include overseeing the administration of admiralty revenues,[83] would maintain vessels, crews, and the equipment necessary so that "when we need them, the said vessels can be promptly put to sea."[84] Each of the three permanently maintained squadrons would be commanded by a *chef d'escadre* with his seaward and landward officers. Previously, Richelieu had named three *lieutenants-généraux de la marine*, whose mandate now was supervisory. They were instructed to "concentrate upon supervising the officials of the marine in such a way that his powers as Grand-Master were respected and upheld to the full."[85] It is not certain whether Richelieu maintained Montmorency's Council of 1624, yet from 1630 onward such a council was administering this hierarchy of maritime authority, demonstrating Richelieu's "continuing determination to exercise close control over his lucrative admiralty interests."[86]

The military control enhanced by the *Règlement* was especially important to him because in March 1630, on a second major campaign into Italy, French armies took Pinerolo. As Pagès relates, Richelieu put a choice to the King on 13 April: keeping Pinerolo and committing to war with Spain, or giving it up to conserve peace. "If the King is resolved for war, we must no longer consider thoughts of tranquillity, the treasury and re-establishment of domestic order." On the Day of the Dupes Richelieu won the dramatic test of the King's confidence and firmly secured his support, but this was tied to the foreign policy ultimatum he offered the King. Louis was endorsing Richelieu's foreign policy as much as he was the man. Thus, although there were residual benefits (such as the freedom to secure his governorships), Richelieu had not permanently secured his position, rather he was challenged further to vindicate the King's choice and with the marine had been given the opportunity to do so.

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[83] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 100.

[84] Quoted in La Cour-Gayet, Marine militaire, 46-47.

[85] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 100.

[86] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 54.

With the *Règlement*, at a single stroke, Richelieu had created a structure within which he could exercise his financial privileges and maintain a close association with all levels of the administration of the marine. By so doing, he was potentially avoiding the time-consuming steps taken in 1627-1628 in preparation for the English attack (insisting on his privileges and power, and then accumulating, repairing and arming ships) by keeping three forces immediately at the Crown's disposal and under his direct authority. Not only were the ships to be kept ready for action, but:

> in order that all things in each province are ready to equip the vessels that will be there, without recourse to others, whose help would be delayed and unsure, in each will be established an arsenal that will always be furnished with all that is necessary for navigation.[87]

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[87] Quoted in La Cour-Gayet, Marine militaire, 50-51.

To facilitate the arming of vessels, each arsenal would be staffed permanently and a strict inventory would be taken to maintain proper stores.

For most of what was necessary for the construction, maintenance and repair of ships, France relied heavily on foreign powers. Already Brittany's forests were depleting, and efforts to exploit the Bourbonnais and Pyrénean forests of Navarre were insufficient. Various trips had been made to get wood, pitch and hemp from Scandinavia, often relying grudgingly on the Dutch as commercial intermediaries and naval experts. Richelieu made no significant attempt to break France of this dependency; such reliance on foreign powers was resented by him only because it had recently proven to be slow and unreliable. Thus based upon Infreville's report on the King's ships and their state of disrepair, a grand expedition was sent in 1631 to Danzig "to buy there everything necessary for the vessels of the King."[88]

Thus, the *Règlement de 1631*, although the only real administrative effort of Richelieu, was a reaction to the immediate context from which it was born, that is, in response to the challenge to make good on his support of an aggressive foreign policy in the aftermath of the Day of the Dupes. The administrative hierarchy was set up to ensure that Richelieu would remain informed and in control of an effective military structure. In 1631 Richelieu's goals were not long-term, but simply to assemble, repair and arm all of the King's vessels in preparation of an opportunity to conduct a military campaign for the King.

Fearing surprise attacks by the Spaniards (or even the English) in 1631, Richelieu ordered his maternal uncle and naval commander, Armador de La Porte, to secure Ré and Oléron. But Richelieu took particular care to ensure the security of these strategic islands by writing to the archevêque de Bordeaux, Henri d'Escoubleau de Sourdis, who had become Richelieu's political ally from his earlier struggles with Épernon and was later to play an essential role in Richelieu's naval programme:[89]

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[88] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 60.

> But since you recognize his [La Porte's] goodwill to be such that he sometimes relies on people who do not execute promptly what he considers necessary, I beseech you to make a trip to Brouage and make prompt and diligent provision for all [that I have indicated].

Richelieu was exercising his authority to name whomever he wished but was subverting his own structure of command at the same time for the sake of competence and greater control through a trusted intermediary. This personal pragmatism was to characterize his directorship of the navy throughout his career, and he was to rely on de Sourdis especially.

> You are a man of order...I beseech you to associate in this way with monsieur le commandeur, so that my spirit can rest. And, write to me often.[90]

For the same reason, the following week Richelieu chastised de Sourdis severely for having just risked his life at Brouage in damaged ships and stormy weather.[91] This vehemence and concern stemmed not only from a fear of foreign attack but from continued fear of plots by his political enemies.[92] It was for the latter reason specifically that Richelieu ordered the coast guard of

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[89] Perhaps also his ecclesiastical office was a consideration to Richelieu.

[90] "A M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. 10 juillet 1631," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 4:176.

[91] "A M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. 28 juillet 1631," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 4:183.

[92] Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 4:225, n. 1.

Normandy to be on the alert.[93] Even after the Day of the Dupes, Richelieu's foreign policy was inextricably connected with an internal political battle for survival.

Regardless, Spain was his greatest challenge, and by 1631 he had done far more to prepare himself than draw up the *Règlement de 1631*; in July he had secured formally the last of the important Admiralties, the Admiralty of the Levant. With the authority of this position now a part of the Grand-Mastership, he could then declare an explicit conviction: "Affairs have changed. We must no longer doubt or hesitate, but prevent that which need no longer be predicted. Spain, the Emperor and Lorraine have joined against France; evil designs have been plotted, ready to unfold if their projects can succeed."[94]

The initial step in the long struggle to secure the Levantine command had come at the time of Infreville's commission in 1629 at Privas, when Louis formally extended the authority of the Grand-Mastership to the Mediterranean.[95] Nevertheless, the Aix Parlement still did not register the Edict of October 1626, and more importantly the duc de Guise refused to recognize any infringement on his claims, even by the King. As Governor of Provence, he claimed a legal and independent right to the title of *Amiral ès mers de Levant*. He had successfully fought Montmorency's earlier attempts to extend the authority of the Grand-Admiral to the Mediterranean and was prepared to do so again with Richelieu.

Richelieu was relentless, however. In March 1630, for instance, with Provence fearing a possible Spanish galley attack, Richelieu had written to the President of the Aix Parlement that "although there is little to fear" he should bypass Guise's authority and prepare the defences of the coast since the duke was at the moment not present. More effectively, Richelieu sent officials to enforce his *congés* as the Grand-Master in the southern ports of France in 1630, disregarding Guise's protests and his refusal to be bought out.[96] Guise reacted forcefully by arresting and exiling the officers, and exercising his traditional right as a Duke and peer took his case against the "so-called Grand-Master"[97] directly to the King. Guise requested that "his differences with the Cardinal be judged by the King himself, because if it is decided by conventional justice the Cardinal, powerful as he is, will judge it as he wishes."[98]

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[93] "A Monsieur Monsieur Robin, à Rouen. 3 février 1632," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 4:255.

[94] "Advis donné au Roy depuis les lettres de Lorraine surprises par Vaubecour. [Vers la fin de mars 1632]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 4:270.

[95] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 139.

Not surprisingly, this was intolerable to Richelieu: "it is an offence to the King, his Council and the judiciary,"[99] he claimed. Nonetheless, he invited Guise to Paris in July 1631 to plead his case. By wisely choosing exile over the confrontation and the possibility of being arrested, Guise made simple the matter of registering the terms of the Grand-Mastership at the Parlement of Provence. Guise felt threatened, and when he was implicated later in a popular rebellion against the Crown, Richelieu's task was complete. He had removed the lawful Admiral of the Levant and successful commander of a number of earlier royal naval campaigns. Guise was replaced as governor of Provence by the mariquis de Vitry, whose task--like Thémines' in

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[96] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 112.

[97] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 139.

[98] Quoted in Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:803, n. 1.

[99] "[31 juillet 1630]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 3:803.

Brittany--was explicitly divorced from the Admiralty.

Only one major maritime office eluded Richelieu in 1631, the Generalship of the Galleys. In addition to combatting Montmorency's claims as the Admiral of France (and the privileges he claimed as governor of Languedoc), Guise also had been occupied by a violent rivalry with Pierre de Gondi, General of the Galleys of the King. Guise claimed this authority as an extension of his privilege as governor of Provence; Gondi claimed his as a direct charge from the King. Authority was unclear, and points of privilege occupied much of their attention.

In a formal declaration of June 1631, shortly before Guise's ouster as governor, Richelieu endorsed Gondi's reasoning as part of his own struggle against Guise. Yet in 1634, arguing further for his right to command unchallenged, Gondi did not impress the Cardinal. Richelieu pressed for his dismissal and was able finally to purchase the title, along with the Hyères islands. As Gondi astutely recognized, "When the bell rings, one must not be deaf."[100] In January 1635 the Grand-Mastership formally absorbed the privileges of the General of the Galleys. In this case, however, Richelieu chose to maintain the office, now firmly in his control, in order to give it to his nephew François Vignerot du Pont-Courlay. By 1635 all of the maritime authority of the Mediterranean was firmly in his control.[101]

Again, Richelieu understood the need to support formal claims of authority. This time, it was Henri de Seguiran, a trusted parlementarian from Provence who, like Infreville before him, was to give a complete inventory and statement of the maritime resources of Southern France in 1633. As

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[100] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 143.

[101] La Roncière, Marine française, 4:572-577.

Richelieu's personal lieutenant, Seguiran carried with him much authority on his two month visit to the ports of the Provençal coast. In contrast to Infreville's commission, Seguiran explicitly and primarily was instructed to enforce obedience and "the precise execution of the edicts and ordonnances" of Richelieu since "their abuse has brought everything to the brink of ruin."[102]

In addition to a detailed map of the coast and a precise inventory of the potential military resources, Seguiran's mission made possible the direct supervision of the defence of the coast. At each port he read out Richelieu's commission as Grand-Master and had it registered by the town council. He tried to "erase any bad impressions...of the motives of His Majesty and the Cardinal."[103] He enforced the collection of taxes as he saw fit or possible;[104] and he enforced the *congés* insisting, on pain of a stiff fine, that each vessel put to sea fly royal colours and those of the Grand-Master.[105]

After meeting with town councils and anyone else of concern to his mission, he examined the shipyards in order to present a complete picture of each port. In this way he revealed the extent of the neglect of formal maritime institutions and resources, corroborating the 1626 remonstrance of Provence. Commercial vessels were forced to arm for their own defence against the disruptive Barbary pirates, and generally all was "falling to ruins."

Bergin suggests that "the fact that [Richelieu] was increasingly pre-occupied as a statesman with the Hapsburg threat in continental Europe might mean that he had less time for maritime and colonial affairs generally from the early 1630s."[106] While it is certainly true that he was pre-occupied with the Spanish challenge, this did not displace his concern with maritime affairs; rather it defined them. As Bergin suggests, the re-organization of the Council of the Marine and its "vigorous" administration of confiscations and wrecks made even foreign war "profitable."[107] The imminent possibility of war motivated the consolidation of his authority and necessarily defined the methods by which he would profit. As the Mediterranean became the focus of conflict between the two maritime powers Richelieu was responding with typical zeal and skill.

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[102] "Voyage et inspection de M. de Séguiran sur les côtes de Provence. 1633," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 3:224.

[103] Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 3:225.

[104] Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 3:313.

[105] Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 3:232.

Because the Code Michaud had been based to a large extent upon Richelieu's ideas as he presented them to the Assembly of Notables in 1626-1627, Victor L. Tapié, like many others, uses its very existence as a plaudit for his effectiveness as an administrator and reformer.[108] Tapié laments, however, the impracticability of the Code and the external forces which led Richelieu to turn his back on reform.[109] Given the political animosity between Richelieu and Marillac, which culminated in the political showdown of the Day of the Dupes, it is tempting to sympathize with Caillet and Boiteux that "political passion had pushed Richelieu to become the artisan of the ruin of a work which had responded so clearly to his wishes."[110] Similarly, Georges Pagès, who also emphasizes Richelieu's political battle with Marillac, links the failure of the Code to Richelieu's inability to undertake fundamental internal reforms, because he so easily was distracted by foreign concerns. Put simply, he was a better statesman than administrator.[111] Yet these critical assessments of Richelieu are based upon a perceived failure to realize his designs as they appear in the Code Michaud and ignore his demonstrated emphases. Richelieu was anticipating the war with Spain, but he was not sacrificing his maritime policy. Genuinely reformist measures like the detailed Code Michaud simply did not reflect the broader political programme of which the battle with Marillac was a part and the war with Spain was to be the climax.

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[106] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 102.

[107] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 116.

[108] Tapié, France in the Age of Louis XIII, 198.

[109] Tapié, France in the Age of Louis XIII, 265.

[110] Boiteux, Grand-Maître, 110.

Richelieu was not alone in shying from the task of enforcing the largely unworkable Code Michaud.[112] His reaction is not exceptional, but it should reveal the weakness of the conclusion that such reforms were a personal priority. Equally, Infreville's mission should provide historians with evidence of more than his thoroughness. The Code Michaud and Infreville's mission are not expressions of the same programme. Rather, they stand in opposition to each other and demand comparison. Richelieu was fundamentally opposed to the Code Michaud because it infringed on his ability to define his own authority, and the reforms in it were not nearly as useful as the fundamental changes he initiated in 1626 and reinforced dramatically before La Rochelle. Infreville's mission, on the other hand, was a practical effort to continue to increase not only his power but also the immediate military strength of the marine. Infreville had acted as an instrument of Richelieu's will, forbidding illegal maritime traditions which compromised his privileges.

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[111] Pagès, Monarchie d'Ancien Régime, 105.

[112] Moote, Louis the Just, 185.

Although he had turned his back on many specific reforms, Richelieu was not unconcerned with reform that supported his policy. By 1630 he was enjoying a certain sense of satisfaction. From his perspective, fundamental reform already had taken place not only by the legislation of 1626 but by the struggle with England. Moreover, he had won the King's support in the Day of the Dupes with his promise of similar, though greater, successes. By 1631 the inevitability of conflict between the French and Spanish Crowns was clear to both Richelieu and Olivares.[113] Accordingly, this was an important year in Richelieu's naval preparations. He had accumulated already an impressive list of governorships, and in that year he added the critical governorship of Brittany and announced the practical reorganization of the *Règlement de 1631*.

Moreover, by January 1631 his revenues in Guyenne, and Aunis-Poitou-Saintonge were farmed.[114] Although his attempts to do the same in the North were less successful, his intent was clear: to consolidate his authority by exercising the associated privileges. While Bergin emphasizes the process of building a personal fortune and financial empire, he remarks on an important connection: "[Richelieu's] wealth could never be a merely private concern to him; it was an intrinsic part of the power that he wielded."[115] As an instrument of the state, his fortune was available to a limited extent for his projects. Yet, more precisely, for Richelieu there was a close association between power and grandeur. Neither could exist in isolation from the other. The process of developing a navy was to be done through him, and therefore as he strengthened the navy he built up a financial empire and increased his authority.

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[113] Elliot, Olivares, 116.

[114] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 106.

[115] Bergin, Power and the Pursuit of Wealth, 60.

The consolidation of his power and the efficient exercise of royal authority had been developing steadily since 1624. Richelieu continued uninterrupted to redefine royal naval authority with himself as an instrument of the King, this time in reaction to the greatest challenge of all, Hapsburg Spain; and, he worked at the Herculean task of preparing a naval force with which to fight. Although Richelieu might have hoped for time for more military preparations, his consolidation of a Mediterranean power base by 1635, in time to meet the Spanish challenge, is a coincidence as impossible to ignore as that of the politics of the Atlantic coast and the English threat of 1626-1628. Richelieu masterfully united the political battles of his day to major diplomatic and military events and in this way raised his influence and significance well beyond the ordinary.

CHAPTER 3

TRIAL BY COMBAT, 1635-1642

Neither the French Crown nor the Spanish Crown was financially prepared to engage in open war in 1635. In particular, Olivares feared for his chances at winning a naval conflict with France, for the Spanish navy was spread out, occupied with trade with the Indies and supplying Flanders and it was beset with organizational problems.[1] Nevertheless, in 1624 he was resolved to engage France with the Neapolitan galley fleet and actively prepared an amphibious attack at Marseille. This was Olivares' "highest priority."[2]

In September 1634 Richelieu received warning that the enemy fleet of twenty-eight galleys and nine galleons had been put to sea for an attack on the Provençal coast.[3] In the event, however, it was grounded at Sardinia, giving rise to the reasonable hope that the campaign was over "and if the winter passes without an attack...we will have the luxury of thinking about proper recourse for the Spring."[4]

As the Mediterranean grew to be the focus of conflict between the two maritime powers, Richelieu had responded by acquiring the necessary control to direct any conflict. Now it was only a matter of tactical concerns and military or fiscal weakness that caused any hesitancy on his part to enter an open naval war with Spain,[5] for Richelieu was not unrealistic about French sea power even in 1635. Indeed, like his counterpart, he feared for his country's ability to win a naval war.[6] Thus, at least in the Atlantic, he was willing to rely openly on the Dutch in the hopes of disrupting the Spaniards as much as possible.[7]

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[1] Carla Rahn Phillips, Six Galleons for the King of Spain: Imperial Defence in the Early Seventeenth Century (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 207-209.

[2] R.A. Stradling, "Olivares and the origins of the Franco-Spanish War, 1627-1635," English Historical Review 101, no. 398 (January 1986), 88.

[3] "[Au Roi.] De Paris, ce 22 septembre 1634," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 4:612-614.

[4] "Pour le Roy. De Paris, ce 2 novembre 1634," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 4:637.

In 1635, however, the Spaniards appeared to have shifted their focus from the Mediterranean and intended some action against France in the Atlantic.[8] In desperation, Richelieu completely ignored his now waning concern with points of privilege with respect to England[9] and ordered his Atlantic commanders to avoid antagonizing the English altogether by sailing under the Dutch flag and under Dutch command.[10] This was a pragmatic preparation for a conflict with Spain in the Atlantic, and apart from plans for a Franco-Dutch fleet which he hoped to operate out of Brest,[11] Richelieu entertained no great military strategies. He ordered his commanders to co-operate fully with the Dutch and simply to attack Spain whenever the occasion presented itself.[12]

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[5] "In 1633-4...Louis XIII [was] straining at the leash for war, while Richelieu [held] him back." Elliott, Olivares, 117. Bonney, Political Change, 259; "We will not have a lack of difficulty defending the islands, since the enemy is the master of the seas and the King has no naval forces which could occupy them." "Pour le Roy. De Paris, ce 2 novembre 1634," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 4:636.

[6] "A Mr De Manty. 26 juin 1635," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:68-70.

[7] "A M. De Charnacé. 28 janvier 1636," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:409; Parker, Thirty Years' War, 151; the captains gathered at Belle-Isle planned for a Franco-Dutch mission to intercept a Spanish-Indies fleet. La Roncière, Marine Française, 4:11.

[8] Stradling, "Olivares and the Origins," 92.

[9] He had come to accept the idea of saluting English fleets either of greater size or in English waters. "A Mr De Manty. 26 juin 1635," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:68-70.

Richelieu's attention was fully re-directed toward the Provençal coast on 13 September 1635, when a Spanish force of twenty-two Neapolitan galleys and five galleons easily took the Lérins islands of St. Marguerite and St. Honorat in front of Cannes and immediately began to fortify them. The Spanish threat to the mainland now was looming ominously, and Richelieu pushed urgently for its defences to be strengthened.[13] In the Mediterranean, an even more concerted effort than had been expected now was required. Richelieu commissioned De Beauveau, l'évêque de Nantes, to assemble from anywhere along the southern coast whatever vessels he could.[14] But the direct threat to French territory meant that the Atlantic forces also would be needed. The stage was set for the open competition for naval supremacy with Spain and, correspondingly, for Richelieu's greatest bid for political prestige from his maritime charge.

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[10] "A M. De Manty. 25 juin 1635," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:66-67. Avenel argues that the opposite is true saying that in this way Richelieu was refusing proudly to lower French colours to English ships. Avenel, Monarchie absolue, 157-158.

[11] "A M. De Charnacé. De Ruel, ce 14 octobre 1635," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:300.

[12] "A Mr De Manty. 26 juin 1635," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:70.

[13] "A M. Servien. A Ruel, ce 30 novembre 1635, à trois heures du matin," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:363.

[14] Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:9.

France formally had declared war with Spain in May of 1635, whereupon Richelieu declared his resolve (along with his intention to have the navy play an important role): "The artifice of our enemies...animates us to war and to prepare doubly for next year [1636], by sea and by land."[15] Although Richelieu was in a favourable position to direct and even to profit from war-time operations, he was still vulnerable politically and he still had many dangerous enemies. The significance of the war, compared to the earlier and more minor struggle with England, made his need for a personal victory especially important.

Thus, early in 1636, in a brief to the King in which he sought approval for the personnel he had chosen to command the combined Atlantic and Levantine fleet, he re-emphasized his role as the trusted minister and the resulting authority he had consolidated for the King with respect to the sea. Richelieu complained of the unsatisfactory condition of Blavet, which he blamed on the "incapable" governor there whom he could not "displace." More importantly, he hoped to appeal to Louis by stressing that it had been hard for him to find appropriate commanders who could show the ability and the fiscal restraint necessary for the navy to succeed. Finally, he asked self-deprecatingly for approval of the list of captains he had chosen "in order that their commissions are granted by His Majesty, and not solely by the Admiralty, as was done in the time of Montmorency."[16] Richelieu insisted that the most important task was to name a commander for which "the choice can come from no one but

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[15] "A M. d'Hémery. De Charonne, ce 16 septembre 1635," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:235-238.

[16] "Au Roi. De Ruel, ce 21e mars 1636," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:434.

His Majesty."[17] In typical fashion, Richelieu thus hoped to ingratiate himself with his royal master.

For Richelieu, placing a capable and trusted ally in command was essential. In the response to the brief, however, Louis chose to ignore Richelieu's choice, a captain named Valin who had led bravely and successfully the crucial relief of Ré in 1627,[18] and named Henri de Lorraine, comte d'Harcourt, as the commander of the combined naval forces. Also, Louis charged Sourdis and Beauveau to "assist Harcourt in the Council and in all things related to his charge" with particular responsibility for the "subsistence of the army, supplies, men, munitions" and for "the fortification of places, the regulation of expenses, judgement of claims and whatever may be necessary."[19] On 20 April 1636 Louis ordered all vessels in the Atlantic to gather at Ré and to prepare to sail for the Mediterranean. At Marseille, the three Atlantic squadrons were to join the Levant fleet. Once together, all were to be under the command of Harcourt "as the representative of the Grand-Master Chief and Superintendent of Commerce, and by virtue of the power that His Majesty had given him."[20]

This hindrance on his ability to manipulate the military command, on the eve of open war, made Richelieu anxious. He decided to rely, henceforth, upon his political ally Sourdis, not upon Harcourt whom Louis had chosen. In this way, without openly challenging the authority of the King, Richelieu competed with him for definition of the command of the force. On 22 April he described the navy as "commanded by M. le comte d'Harcourt [but] particularly animated by M. de Bordeaux [Sourdis]."[21] More revealing, however, is his decision to give formal orders for the fleet to the Archbishop "from fear that they may be divulged" to others.[22]

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[17] "Au Roi. Résolution pour le commandement de l'armée navale. De Ruel, ce 28e mars 1636," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:434.

[18] La Roncière, Marine française, 4:515-516.

[19] Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:13.

[20] "Instruction donnée par le Roi à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, commandant son armée navale, et la passant de Ponant en Levant. De Chantilly, le 20 avril [1636]," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:27.

In an oddly inverted structure of command, Richelieu relied also on the practically experienced sea captain Des Gouttes (who commanded the Brittany squadron) to watch Sourdis. Although Richelieu formally expected Sourdis to undercut Harcourt if necessary and to provide the able command necessary for victory, he used Des Gouttes as "his eyes" to ensure that all went well.[23] As with the *Règlement de 1631*, therefore, Richelieu's objective was not a rational chain of command. Rather, it was one in which each level watched the others and was directly accountable to him. A hierarchy that would serve as a model for the future was not Richelieu's concern, nor were the necessary legal formalities of the moment. Richelieu wanted to maintain exclusive control and exercise it successfully through only officers whom he trusted.

The Atlantic fleet set sail, after numerous delays, on 23 June 1636. Trouble arose when it arrived on 17 July to find Beauveau, the baron d'Allemagne (commander of the Levant squadron), Du Pont-Courlay and the bailli de Forbin

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[21] "A Charnacé. De Charonne, ce 22e avril 1636," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:447.

[22] "Pour M. Bouthillier. De St. Brice, le 25 avril 1636," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:448.

[23] Jal, Abraham Du Quesne, 64. Richelieu referred to his trustworthy commander as the "Father of the Sea," Chabaud-Arnault, "Les flottes de Louis XIII," Revue Maritime et des Colonies 90 (1886), 247.

(Du Pont-Courlay's second-in-command) in heated conflict, with the result that very little had been prepared with which to augment the Atlantic fleet.[24] Especially ominous for the mission was the jealousy with which the marquis de Vitry held to his powers as governor of Provence, alienating all of the others by insisting on the directorship of any military operation.

In response Louis himself insisted, on 27 August 1636, that Harcourt was to command any naval operation. To ease tensions, he declared that Vitry would command any land operation in Provence. As for Sourdis, however, he was equally clear: "my intention is that in all things for which you do not have my explicit wishes you will execute punctually all that is resolved [either] by my cousin the comte d'Harcourt," by Vitry if the army is in Provence or Monaco or by the common consent of the Council of the Admiralty.[25] A letter of the same day from Richelieu to the archevêque de Sourdis highlights the Cardinal's personal ambition and almost treasonous innovation with the command:

> I send you the power that is necessary for you in the case of an obstacle from M. le comte d'Harcourt, which, God willing, will not happen. I beseech you not to show this to anyone unless it is necessary....This must be so...in order to get things done without ostentation.[26]

A further complication was the charge of General of the Galleys. Richelieu's pre-war preparations in the

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[24] "Seconde Relation. Envoyée à Paris le 28 juillet 1636, étant au travers des îles de Majorque," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:51.

[25] "Lettre du Roi. De Chantilly, le 27 août 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:74-75.

[26] "Lettre de M. le Cardinal de Richelieu. A M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, touchant le passage de l'armée navale du Levant au Ponant. De Charonne, le 27 août 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:76.

Mediterranean had involved augmenting the galley fleet;[27] he had encouraged construction and expected to have at sea eighteen galleys as early as April 1635 and two more shortly thereafter,[28] and to man them he had ordered prisoners to be brought.[29] It was not his intention for the galleys to play a small part, but rather than eliminating the office by consolidating it with the Grand-Mastership, Richelieu had chosen to offer it to his nephew Du Pont-Courlay whom he did not trust. Now he threatened him saying: "I would rather see you [Du Pont-Courlay] dead than to fail to do what I expect."[30]

Sublet des Noyers, the minister of war, was as aware of Richelieu's tremendous naval authority as he was of the importance of clientage and so informed Sourdis:

> I assure you that, considering who the General of the Galleys is to his Eminence, you should allow him the chance, in the attack, to attain glory and honour, and it seems to me that we all have an interest in it.[31]

Nevertheless, Richelieu's confidence in Du Pont-Courlay's character was weak, saying "the General of the Galleys does not adhere to reason,"[32] and in 1636 he cautioned: "When you have a fight with someone, I immediately fear that you are in the wrong, knowing your disposition." Thus, when, in a passion, Du Pont-Courlay carelessly dismissed the captains of the galleys, Richelieu had to step in, reinstate them and apologize.[33] Once again he relied on Sourdis and implored him "to do what you can to repair the damage he has done and to prevent any such disorder in the future from troubling the King's service." Thus, the hierarchy of naval command as it functioned early in the war is not readily schematized, for it was defined by conflicting perceptions by the King, by Richelieu and by those who commanded.

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[27] Jal, Abraham Du Quesne, 54-55.

[28] "A M. le Bailly de Forbin. Du janvier 1636," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:417-419.

[29] "Pour M. des Noyers. 15 septembre 1635," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:229.

[30] "A M. Du Pont de Courlay. 24 aoust 1636," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:566.

[31] "Lettre de M. de Noyers à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. D'Abbeville, le 2 novembre 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:163.

[32] "A M. l'Évesque de Nantes. Du 31 juillet 1636," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:524.

For Richelieu, however, it was not complicated at all. He wished to channel all his authority personally to those whom he trusted, and in particular to Sourdis and Des Gouttes. In July 1635 France signed the Treaty of Rivoli with the Dukes of Savoy and Parma to consolidate its influence in North Italy which to that point had been restricted to the occupation of Casale and Pinerolo.[34] Thus, strategically, he felt that helping the Duke of Parma in Mantua was "one of the most important things that we have right now."[35] Thus, the instructions for the navy upon its arrival in the Mediterranean in 1636 were to get a foothold in a Genoese port from which to help Parma and also to retake the Lérins.[36] Beyond these objectives, Richelieu's plans went no further than to order the naval forces to do whatever was possible given the occasion.[37]

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[33] See the many letters from this period; Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:481-484, 502, 504; Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:71-72, 570-573.

[34] Tapié, France in the Age of Louis XIII, 330.

[35] "Lettre de M. le Cardinal de Richelieu à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, touchant le secours de Parme. D'Orléans, le 29 août 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:77.

[36] "Instruction donnée par le Roi à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, commandant son armée navale, et la passant de Ponant en Levant. De Chantilly, le 20 avril [1636]," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:25.

Yet so tangled in jealous competition for control was the Mediterranean command that the Atlantic fleet was left with no aid and achieved nothing of note in the summer of 1636. As the Spaniards took advantage of this inactivity to strengthen positions on the Italian mainland, it was toward the Lérins islands that full French attention now turned, and Richelieu made known his displeasure and his earnestness:

> Veritably, I would be greatly displeased to have created a fleet such as the one that fortunately passed from the Ponant to the Levant, and receive nothing in return....At least we must chase the enemy from the islands and combat them at sea if we can.[38]

For Richelieu some sort of victory was necessary, and thus typically he challenged Sourdis to "repair the displeasure that we all must feel because the fleet has done nothing this year."[39]

As important to Richelieu as a victory for France was a victory that reflected well on his reputation or that maintained his control of the navy. Because he had been forced to rely on Sourdis, therefore, he needed his commander to distinguish himself particularly. On 12 October the King wrote to Sourdis ordering a vigorous effort to recapture the Lérins.[40] A week later Richelieu, presuming it unnecessary to admonish his trusted servant, wrote to Harcourt and Vitry instead to express his surprise and displeasure that the islands still had not been taken and warned these two that he had written to Sourdis so that now "no one can have an excuse for defaulting on what must be done for the marine."[41]

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[37] "Instruction à M. le comte d'Harcourt qu'on luy envoya estant arrivé avec l'armée navale dans la mer Mediterranée. 28 juillet 1636," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:520.

[38] "Lettre de Mgr le Cardinal de Richelieu touchant les desseins de l'armée navale du Levant. De Paris, le 29 août 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:89.

[39] "Lettre de M. le Cardinal de Richelieu à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, touchant le dessein de Morgues. De l'abbaye de la Victoire près Senlis, ce 12 septembre 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:117.

Appropriately, Sublet Des Noyers, recognizing the importance of a satisfactory naval victory for the powerful Cardinal, again warned Sourdis that:

> This enterprise is very important to France and to the reputation of the arms of the King; but, since it must be executed by a navy, you know what part his Eminence must play in it; you must...do the impossible to have it succeed....[42]

At this time Beauveau was recalled, and Richelieu explained to Sourdis on 19 November that now "you are alone charged with the care of the navy, both Mediterranean and Atlantic." Recognizing the danger of this conflict with the King's order, Richelieu suggested not discussing it with others, rather simply to go ahead with the command. In a postscript, he revealed the source of his earnestness: "I beseech you to follow through in such a way that the attack of the islands is not failed from lack of anything that could depend on my charge and your care."[43] In other words, he did not want the attack to reflect badly on him or his creature.

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[40] Louis had said, "the re-taking of the islands, [is] that which I desire the most [and] for which I have passed my navy to the seas of the Levant." "Lettre du Roi a M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, reppelant près de lui l'évêque de Nantes. De Senlis, le 12 septembre 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:116.

[41] "A M. le comte d'Arcourt. Du 19 novembre 1636," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:685.

[42] "Lettre de M. de Noyers à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. D'Amiens, ce 13 octobre 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:139.

A letter the following day from the King is less complex. Louis explained that Beauveau was being recalled in order to send a replacement, who would "press forward the attack" and to ensure that Sourdis "renders good service" and not "difficulties which could retard the execution of the enterprise."[44]

Despite the thoroughness with which he had consolidated his maritime authority, this competition for control and the confusion that plagued the naval hierarchy in 1636 led to criticism of the definition of Richelieu's "charge"[45] and the suggestion that the Grand-Mastership be dismantled. Richelieu hoped to win time by insisting that such concerns should wait at least until "we have finished these affairs."[46] He knew his power, no matter how strong, was not entirely secure, and once again he depended for his very political life on victory. The difference in the two letters of 19 and 20 November suggests that, to a great extent, Richelieu's credibility as a naval authority (and therefore perhaps as a trusted minister) in the eyes of the King depended on the success or reputation of Sourdis upon whom he had chosen to rely.

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[43] "Lettre de M. le Cardinal de Richelieu à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux touchant l'attaque des îles Sainte-Marguerite et Saint-Honorat. De Corbie, ce 19 novembre 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:185-186.

[44] "Lettre du Roi à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, pour le presser de faire attaquer les îles. De Chantilly, le 20 novembre 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:186.

[45] "Lettre de M. de Noyers à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. D'Abbeville, le 2 novembre 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:162.

[46] "Lettre de M. le cardinal de Richelieu à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, touchant les affaires d'Italie. D'Abbeville, le 3 novembre 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:164.

Despite such problems, Richelieu's naval programme had been successful enough that it had attracted the attention of foreigners. The sudden growth of French sea power could not be ignored, and in 1636 the Spaniards still felt unprepared to match the French in the Mediterranean. Not only did their emphasis remain on supplying Flanders through the Atlantic, but the rapidity with which the French launched a fleet led to exaggerated rumours of its strength. In fact, the Spanish commander who was ordered to join his fleet of five galleons of only 500 tons with the Neapolitan galleys was frightened by the prospect of facing the combined French fleet, claiming that they had "an enormous fleet of seventy ships...forty of them large and some above 2000 tons, 'something never before seen on the sea.'"[47]

In no modern accounts of the French marine is a serious attempt made to gauge the actual physical presence of the French fighting fleet. In point of fact, the Atlantic fleet that sailed for the Mediterranean in 1636 numbered only thirty-eight warships, each carrying between 100 and 300 men. Of these, twelve were of 500 tons or more.[48] In addition, there were six *brulots* or small fireships of up to 200 tons (used for burning fleets at anchor), and twelve efficient transport vessels that could carry up to 300 men. Only seven large vessels were left to guard France's

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[47] The Spanish had two galleons of over 700 tons, two of 600 tons, and one of 500 tons. Phillips, Six Galleons, 208.

[48] These were *Le Navire du Roi* of 1000 tons and fifty-four guns, *La Licorne* of 600 tons, ten others of 500 tons, eight of 300 tons, twelve of 200 tons, and six of under 200 tons all of between eight and thirty-four guns. "État des vaisseaux dont sera composée l'armée navale du Roi, sur l'océan, en 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:36-37.

Atlantic coast.[49]

The combined fleet that was to challenge Spanish forces was still less impressive on the scene. In October Manty (the commander of the Guyenne squadron with a small number of the Breton vessels under his command) reported considerable damage to a number of ships because of a storm at sea. Two of the largest were damaged, and six others were sunk.[50] By 7 November Harcourt was still waiting to meet Manty's Guyenne squadron of fourteen ships (though now significantly reduced). Moreover, the Normandy squadron of only eight ships, none over 300 tons, was poorly supplied and could last only one more week at sea. In Harcourt's estimation, only two ships from Provence were worth having: *le Galion* and *la Pelicorne*. The others were "nothing but collected sundry" without sufficient firepower. He recognized the worth of only two large warships from the Atlantic (*Le Navire du Roi* of 1000 tons and the recently damaged *La Licorne* of 600 tons), and four 500 ton vessels of the Breton squadron: *le Coq, le Cygne, le Saint-Geneviève* and *le Saint-Michel*.[51] Thus, Harcourt felt he had only six vessels from the Atlantic and two from Provence with which to lead a motley collection of small ships.

Harcourt's pessimism was offered as a challenge to Sourdis; he wanted all forces kept together for strength and thereby to retain the entire command according to his commission from the King. In the event, such competition left the navy completely paralysed in 1636, and by 6 December tensions in the command rose to the point where Vitry physically struck Sourdis. Not surprisingly, Richelieu was infuriated and sent both men scathing reprimands.[52] More importantly, the failure to take the Lérins bitterly disappointed Louis, who also reprimanded those in command and ordered a renewed emphasis, as a result, on reinforcing the Duke of Parma.[53] Unfortunately for Louis' policy, this aid also failed to appear, and in February 1637 Parma switched sides, joining forces with the Spaniards.[54] Ominously, Spanish forces had just attacked St. Jean-de-Luz, a town near the Pyrenean border on the Atlantic coast of France, late in 1636. Although they were later forced to withdraw by the prince de Condé, the Atlantic was also becoming a concern, and the ineffectiveness of the fleet to this point, despite its reputation, was becoming a potentially dangerous failure for Richelieu.

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[49] These were: at Brouage, the famous *La Couronne, le Henry* of 500 tons, *le Saint* of 400 tons, and *l'Ange* of 200 tons. At Brest remained *le Vice-Amiral* of 700 tons, and *le Saint-Louis* of 500 tons. Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:37.

[50] Significantly the damaged ships were *la Licorne* and another ship of 500 tons. "Lettre de M. de Manty à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. De Toulon, le 18 octobre 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:144-145.

[51] "Lettre de M. le comte d'Harcourt à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, sur l'attaque des îles. De Gourgan, à bord de l'Amiral, le 7 novembre 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:168-169.

Upon hearing of Parma's change of allegiance, an alternative plan was adopted by Sourdis for the Mediterranean early in 1637. He informed Richelieu that his forces had gone to Sardinia to divert Spanish attention by attacking Oristano,[55] in what could also be a potential trade-off for the Lérins.[56] Richelieu preferred taking the islands directly and cautiously warned that "if after having the ball in your court several times you do not win a point, you will be held incapable of any task of significance."[57] On 24 February French forces under Sourdis' command took Oristano, and Richelieu resigned himself to this improvised plan.[58] Unfortunately for the French commander and his master, he was unable to benefit from his victory as his attack degenerated into an unorganized sack, and on 26 February Spanish reinforcements chased the French from the island.

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[52] "A M. de Bordeaux. Du 9 décembre 1636," and "A M. de Vitry. 9 décembre 1636," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:708, 709.

[53] "Lettre du Roi à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, témoignant son déplaisir que les îles n'ont pas été attaquées, et désirant que l'on aille secourir Parme. De Noisy, ce 22 décembre 1636," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:229-231.

[54] La Roncière, Marine française, 5:26.

Just as Richelieu feared, royal attention remained focused on the Lérins, and this time Harcourt commanded an attack. After a disastrous attempt to land troops on the island of St. Marguerite on 27 March, Harcourt succeeded the next day. By 6 May the cornered Spanish governor capitulated to the French forces. Only one day was needed to force the defeat of the less-fortified neighbouring island of St. Honorat. By 14 May the struggle to recover the Lérins was over. Although this was a decisive victory for the Crown, Richelieu's particular interests suffered a relative failure as did his reputation.

Richelieu expressed joy over the recent successes, despite his disappointment.[59] In accordance with orders sent by Louis one day previously, he ordered Sourdis and his squadron to return to the Atlantic and to gather forces at Ré to await further instruction. For the return journey, however, Richelieu made a passing gesture to the Barbary pirates in the hopes of salvaging something:

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[55] "Lettre de M. M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux à Mgr le cardinal, par M. de Caen, touchant le voyage que les vaissaux du Roi ont fait en Sardaigne. Du 12 février 1637," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:281.

[56] La Roncière, Marine française, 5:27.

[57] "Lettre de M. le cardinal de Richelieu à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, touchant l'attaque des îles. De Paris, le 15 février 1637," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:283.

[58] "Lettre de M. le cardinal de Richelieu à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, touchant l'entreprise sur la Sardaigne. De Ruel, le 1er mars 1637," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:304.

> If on returning you can do something to reclaim French slaves from Tunis and Algiers, you may do it; and I believe, since you have said so many times, that the best method for this is to frighten them and to take as many of their vessels as possible, after which we can come some arrangement or other.

More importantly, Sourdis was ordered to attack any Spanish vessels that he met along the way. In other words, he was to do anything with which to distinguish himself and by association the Cardinal.

In this letter, although Richelieu expressed regret and worry at the continued disagreements between Sourdis and Harcourt, he was clear as to whom he hoped would be distinguished in the execution of these orders. To Sourdis he said: "I strongly desire that on your voyage, where you alone will command the vessels, you will be able to do something that will distinguish the name Sourdis." In so doing, Richelieu also told Sourdis to take particular care with "the privileges of my charge [the Grand-Mastership]...and to establish such order that in the future no one will be able to frustrate me as has been done in the past."[60]

An opportunity presented itself with a Spanish attack of the French coastal town of Leucate in Languedoc. On 18

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[59] "Au Roy. De Ruel, ce 22e juin 1637, à six heures du soir," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 5:793-795.

[60] "Lettre de M. le cardinal de Richelieu à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, sur la prise de l'îsle Sainte-Marguerite. De Ruel, le 28 mai 1637," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:393-395.

September, Sourdis was ordered to relieve the besieged town.[61] Although no nearby port could accommodate properly a fleet, Sourdis undertook the task and the siege was lifted. For this he won praise from Louis, which undoubtedly pleased Richelieu and raised his political hopes.[62] Yet with the earlier attack on St. Jean-de-Luz of 1636 and this attack on Languedoc in 1637, Richelieu suspected for 1638 that Spanish attention would fall away from the Valtelline, Italy and the Lérins to a double attack on France proper at Bayonne and Narbonne. Thus, he was more concerned with the defence of Guyenne for the new year; and because it was already late in the season he wanted soon to get the navy to the Atlantic.[63] In Sourdis' absence from the Mediterranean he would rely more heavily on the galleys in the Mediterranean.

On the sea, Richelieu had great expectations for 1638, for Sourdis, who had just won praise from Louis at Leucate, was in sole command of the Atlantic forces[64] (seconded by Des Gouttes). With no competition for his creature, Richelieu in turn could enjoy uncontested prestige from any successes. Also, Richelieu had just purchased twelve new vessels from Holland which soon would join the fleet, along with more reinforcements from Provence.[65]

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[61] "Lettre de M. le cardinal de Richelieu à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, pour aller en Languedoc contre l'entrée des Espagnols. De Conflans, ce 18 septembre 1637," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:504.

[62] "Lettre du Roi à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. De Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, le 11 octobre 1637," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:517.

[63] "Extrait d'une lettre de M. de Sabran à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. De Gênes, ce 1er octobre 1637," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 1:516.

[64] "Pour M. de Chavigny. De Royaumont, ce 1er may 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:31.

On land, in 1638 Condé's goal was to besiege and take Fuenterrabia, just across the Spanish border on the Bay of Biscay. It was the task of the Atlantic fleet to help him from the sea. For the siege, the Crown hoped that Condé's forces were sufficient. Richelieu implored the Prince to proceed as if he were to receive no aid from the sea;[66] this was not to suggest that he feared Sourdis might be of no help but rather that his naval forces might encounter even greater opportunities.

Richelieu had confidence in these collected naval forces and assured Condé:

> All of Spain could not put to sea forces that match these, and having taken Passajes,[67] we deprive them of their ability to be strong at sea; thus I consider it vital to keep this port, and, to do this, to take, after Fuenterrabia, Saint-Sebastien, which will be straightforward, being reinforced by M. de Bordeaux [Sourdis] and the fleet that he commands.[68]

Richelieu was enthusiastic as never before, for everything was falling into place. Another, and perhaps greater, opportunity to make a powerful statement of his worth was presenting itself. He hoped to demonstrate that the French navy under his direction had come of age. Fuelling this hope was the 1638 launching of the magnificent *La Couronne*. Richelieu had been taking particular care with the protection of the ship to ensure that it could be put to sea in time to complement the anticipated successes.[69] Yet everything depended upon the success of the siege of Fuenterrabia. And in contrast to his earlier suggestion to Condé, Richelieu warned Sourdis that he should be especially diligent and that if he failed to help, he could be blamed personally for the failure of the siege.[70]

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[65] "A M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. 16 juillet 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:60.

[66] "A M. le Prince. Le 20 juin 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:56.

[67] Condé had attacked Passajes, near Fuentarrabia the previous year and de Sourdis was ordered there before arriving at the siege.

[68] "A M. le Prince. Du 19 juillet 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:67.

Just prior to the attack on Fuenterrabia a small division sailed westward to provide warning of approaching Spanish fleets. It met and frightened a Spanish fleet sailing from La Corunna that slipped into Guetaria for safety. There, upon Sourdis' arrival, battle ensued on 22 August. In a small roadstead, the two fleets clashed in dramatic action, and Sourdis emerged the decisive victor. With very little damage, the French commander had destroyed the Spanish squadron; it was with genuine pleasure and pride that Richelieu reported this clear victory to Louis.[71]

He encouraged Sourdis further by passing along Condé's high praise for his achievement and the hope that with Fuenterrabia the Archbishop would win "a great reputation."[72] Richelieu's enthusiasm for the siege of the Spanish stronghold was growing with his confidence: "I wait for the gain of Fuenterrabia with more impatience than I can express."[73] And, looking beyond the anticipated victory of Fuenterrabia he authorized Sourdis to proceed as he saw fit against other targets along the Spanish coast as they presented themselves.[74]

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[69] "A M. le commandeur de La Porte. De Ruel, ce 22 mars 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:21.

[70] "A M. de Bordeaux. 16 juillet 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:61.

[71] "Au Roi. De Péronne, le 30 aoust 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:125.

[72] "A M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. 14 septembre 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:170.

[73] "A M. de Chavigni. De Saint-Quentin, ce 3 septembre [1638]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:138.

The most devastating blow to Richelieu's maritime career came on 17 September with the news that Condé's forces were beaten and that Sourdis could do nothing to avert the disaster. "I have just learned of the misery at Fuenterrabia," he lamented. "I am outraged; it pierces my heart and I can say no more about it."[75] The importance of the siege of Fuenterrabia to Richelieu's naval designs had come to be paramount, and this failure was critical. "The pain of Fuenterrabia kills me."[76]

French sea power was not to make as dramatic a statement as Richelieu had hoped, and for 1639 the Cardinal returned to his earlier emphases. In the Atlantic, the interruption of the Spanish support of Flanders became the primary objective.[77] Since the Spaniards were concerned this year with winning a naval victory over the Dutch, Richelieu encouraged his allies to take the initiative, offering rewards and honours to successful Dutch admirals.[78] Sourdis was ordered simply to be as disruptive as he could. Accordingly, he was ordered later to attack La Corunna, where the Spanish were assembling the largest armada since 1588 for a campaign against the Dutch. Arriving before the port on 8 June, however, Sourdis was swayed to withdraw by sober second thought. Without achieving anything, he returned to France and along the way the fleet was battered by storms. Among the damaged ships was the as yet untested *La Couronne*. To highlight further French ineffectiveness, the Dutch forces soundly defeated the Spanish fleet on 21 October 1639 off the English coast in the Battle of the Downs.

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[74] "Pour M. de Chavigny. De Han, ce 31 aoust 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:130.

[75] "A M. de Chavigni. De Saint-Quentin, ce 17 septembre [1638]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:179-181.

[76] "Au Roi. De Saint-Quentin, ce 17 septembre 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:182.

[77] "A M. d'Estrades. 22 décembre 1639," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:657.

[78] "Mémoire à M. de Bellièvre, 18 octobre 1639," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:583.

Sourdis learned of some harboured Spanish galleons, and in August he returned to Spain, where he landed troops, and both Santona and Laredo across the harbour were taken. There were, in fact, only two galleons, and the Spaniards attempted to scuttle them; but Sourdis was able to save and take one. Although this attack was a success, it was entirely improvised and insignificant when compared to the Dutch victory of the Downs. To Richelieu, it offered no real prospect of future advantage,[79] and alone could not make up for the failure to take Fuenterrabia.

Nevertheless, on 28 August the Cardinal congratulated his commander, while at the same time implying a more ominous message. "I consider this victory an omen of things to come, being assured that you will not fail to do whatever is necessary to continue."[80] In other words Sourdis was being warned, in a way he could hardly miss, not to rest on this laurel. Richelieu dissuaded him from fortifying Laredo, preferring instead his return to France to await other opportunities.

Any remaining hope for satisfaction for Richelieu from the 1640 campaigning season lay in the Mediterranean, for earlier in 1638 Du Pont-Courlay had provided an unexpected victory in a clash of French and Spanish galley forces off Genoa. This victory had been partly responsible for Richelieu's rising enthusiasm prior to the siege of Fuenterrabia, and he hoped still to build on it. In 1638 Harcourt had been entrusted with sole command in the Mediterranean,[81] but Richelieu had suffered irritation from Du Pont-Courlay who delayed numerous times before finally putting to sea.[82] And though Richelieu was especially pleased to hear of the victory just over one month later, he did not disguise his continued disdain for his nephew, declaring: "I am infinitely happy that that little snail has shown that he has more heart than financial know-how."

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[79] "Réponse aux faits proposés par le sieur de Ménillet, de la part de M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. Fait à Abbeville, le 7 juillet 1639," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:112.

[80] "A Mons. M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, 28 août 1639," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:497.

Richelieu benefited from any victory. "The King's victories ravish me, for me it is an extreme contentment to see that that which is particularly under my control should do its duty."[83] However, as at the time of the victory at Santona and Laredo, he could see no real advantage. Thus, in the hopes of building on the victory, he replaced Du Pont-Courlay on 20 March 1639 with another nephew, the young Armand de Maillé-Brézé. In 1640 to accommodate this shift in emphasis he named Sourdis to the Levant command and moved Maillé-Brézé to the Atlantic command (under Des Gouttes' tutelage).[84] This re-arrangement of authority coincided with the start of work on Toulon as a suitable naval harbour[85] and a commitment to the Mediterranean.

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[81] "Pour M. de Chavigny. De Royaumont, ce 1er may 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:30-32.

[82] "Pour M. Bouthillier. D'Abbeville, ce 10e aoust 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:83.

[83] "Pour M. de Chavigny. De Saint-Quentin, ce 15 septembre 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:175-176.

[84] "A M. d'Estrades. Du 14 avril 1640," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:682. This left the immediate command of the galleys in 1640 in the hands of Brézé's lieutenant Forbin. Jal, Abraham Du Quesne, 106.

Maillé-Brézé's debut as a naval commander in the Atlantic was inauspicious. With his fleet of twenty-four vessels he sailed for Cadiz in April to block a Spanish convoy destined for the Americas.[86] He was able to force the Spaniards back into the harbour, but he was unable to translate this into a significant victory.[87]

Far more concerned for Sourdis' success in the Mediterranean, Richelieu obligingly sent the prisoners for which Sourdis had been clamouring, to man up to twenty-two galleys[88] and again gave him the authority to exercise a free hand,[89] although if he could he was directed to take Spanish ports along the coast of Italy.

In the event, intercepting a significant reinforcement that was gathering at Naples and destined for Genoa was the most pressing naval concern in 1640. Yet Sourdis' Levant fleet of seventeen ships, eighteen galleys and five *brulots* failed even to do this. Sourdis initially had sought a confrontation with the Spaniards, but to Richelieu's embarrassment, they slipped past his commander unnoticed and landed near Genoa.[90] Sourdis was inconsistent in his defence complaining in July to Richelieu that the port officials and land officers were to blame because they had forced him to sail to Marseille to recruit more men. Later, it was Forbin and the galley fleet, always afraid to do battle, that were to blame.[91] Predictably, Richelieu was not satisfied with these accounts and reacted with anger toward Sourdis.[92] "The most important, and perhaps the only, service that you could [have rendered] is to [have prevented] this landing." Richelieu's personal assessment of Sourdis' mission was scathing: "The Archbishop has done nothing this campaigning season [1640]; the expense has been dreadful; the command and execution equally so. Nothing tangible! Only the chimerical!"[93]

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[85] Jal, Abraham Du Quesne, 49; Fournier, Hydrographie, 825.

[86] "A M. d'Estrades. Du 14 avril 1640," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:682.

[87] Jenkins, French Navy, 28.

[88] "Pour Mons. l'archevesque de Bordeaux. De Ruel, ce 11e mars 1640," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:679.

[89] "Instruction donnée par commandement du Roi à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux s'en allant commander l'armée navale de Sa Majesté en Levant, celle de terre en Provence, durant la présente année 1640. Écrit à Ruel, le 23 mars 1640," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:147.

[90] "Lettre de M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux à M. le cardinal de Richelieu, touchant son voyage à Naples et celui à Gênes. [August 1640]," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:268.

Despite this upbraiding, Sourdis remained as eager as ever, proposing many alternative aggressive plans.[94] However, Richelieu was convinced by now that Sourdis "talked more liberally than he ought,"[95] and by November with Des

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[91] "Lettre de M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux à M. le cardinal de Richelieu. Du travers Montesant, le 8 septembre 1640," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:306-307.

[92] "Lettre de M. le cardinal de Richelieu à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, touchant les manquements faits par le bailli de Forbin, les prises des marchandises et la disposition des vaisseaux. [September 1640]," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:319.

[93] "A Mons. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. Du 8 août 1640," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:719.

[94] "Lettre de M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux à M. le cardinal de Richelieu, lui mandant qu'il a dessein d'empêcher la jonction de cinq mille hommes des ennemis. Par le travers du golfe de Spezzia, le 26 août 1640," and "Lettre de M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux à M. le cardinal, sur le défaut de vivres et le mauvais état de Porto-Longone. Du travers du mont Argentaro, le 29 août 1640," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:282-284, 289.

[95] "A l'archevesque de Bordeaux. 10 novembre 1640," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:733.

Gouttes' advice he was resigned to the fact that another season had passed inauspiciously. He prepared an unusually detailed order for the division of the fleet, citing vessels by name and earmarking each ship either for the Atlantic or for the Mediterranean fleet for 1641. The older ones simply were to be sold.[96] This personal concern for details reveals his waning confidence in Sourdis as clearly as his rebukes.

Popular unrest in Portugal and Catalonia offered France an ideal opportunity to disrupt the affairs of Spain, and Richelieu hoped to use his best ships, still under Sourdis' command, to this end in 1641. In December 1640 the French maréschal de Schomberg led an army to Roussillon against the royal Spanish forces based at Perpignan, Collioure, and Port-Vendres. In Catalonia the Spanish Crown's strongholds were in Rosas and Tarragona. The Catalan rebels, centred around Barcelona, were supported by French troops under the maréschal de La Mothe-Houdancourt.[97] Richelieu placed his hopes for success on the Mediterranean fleet: "On the sea forces depends the success of Catalonia."[98]

In the Atlantic, Maillé-Brézé was to oversee the gathering of a combined French, Dutch and Portuguese fleet. Waiting for their allied help to arrive, however, Maillé-Brézé and Des Gouttes failed to disrupt the Spanish in any way worthy of note. This put tremendous pressure on Sourdis, not only because Gibraltar had not been blocked and Spanish reinforcements now could be sent to the eastern shores, but because Richelieu's confidence in his commander was weakening.

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[96] "Ordre du cardinal de Richelieu à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, sur les vaisseaux qui ont à repasser en Ponant, ceux qu'il faut vendre ou mettre en brûlots, avec le projet des armements de Ponant et de Levant pour l'année, 1641, [November 1640]," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:349-350.

[97] Chabaud-Arnault, "Les flottes de Louis XIII," 388.

[98] "Pour M. le surintendant des finances. D'Abbeville, ce 6e juin 1641," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:807.

By 1641 a movement was afoot to discredit Sourdis,[99] and the conspirators held Richelieu's ear. He suggested to Sourdis, "some might believe that you only propose overly difficult plans so that you will not have to do anything."[100] On 8 April Schomberg was recalled, and Condé took the direction of all military forces, both landed and maritime. At the same time, a new emphasis was placed on La Mothe-Houdancourt's efforts against Tarragona. Henceforth, against Sourdis' protests, the fleet was to concentrate on helping him from the sea.

Sourdis complained bitterly of the folly of "beginning at the wrong end," preferring to consolidate a holding in Perpignan and then to move south.[101] He felt improperly prepared: "If I go...grave misfortunes" will arise. His presence at Tarragona would be "completely useless."[102]

But Richelieu was not to be swayed, complaining that Sourdis was impossible to satisfy. "If the vessels that you have are not ready to serve, you have yourself to blame." Richelieu was certain that a victory was possible and ordered Sourdis to help La Mothe-Houdancourt at Tarragona by all means possible.[103]

Despite questioning Richelieu's judgement, Condé wrote to Sourdis, "You must obey [the Cardinal], come what may," and remain at Tarragona.[104] Sourdis maintained as well as he could the blockade at Tarragona. Early in June he learned that the Naples fleet was joining other forces at Cartagena and suggested attacking them in harbour. La Mothe-Houdancourt insisted that Tarragona was on the verge of capitulation and insisted that the blockade be maintained. Sourdis warned La Mothe-Houdancourt, Condé and Des Noyers that the combined Spanish forces would be too much for him, but confidence that Tarragona soon would fall left his warnings unheeded. Indeed, Richelieu was clear. Despite the fact that Sourdis' crews were ill, he insisted they remain "until the Tarragona affair is complete."[105]

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[99] Chabaud-Arnault, "Les flottes de Louis XIII," 390.

[100] Chabaud-Arnault, "Les flottes de Louis XIII," 389.

[101] "Lettre de M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux à M. d'Argenson. [April 1641]," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:570-572.

[102] "Lettre de M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux à M. le Prince de Condé, [June 1641]," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:626-627.

[103] "Lettre de M. le cardinal de Richelieu à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. D'Abbeville, ce 2 juin 1641," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:609-610.

On 20 August twenty-nine Spanish galleys arrived supplemented by a number of smaller vessels to be followed soon by thirty-five large warships. Through five hours of heavy fighting, the French vessels were able to maintain their position though Tarragona was relieved. Claiming an acute lack of supplies and strength, however, Sourdis then retreated to Provence on 25 August. This decision sealed his fate.

Des Noyers, among others, was behind the movement to have Sourdis shoulder the blame for the failure at Tarragona and then be exiled in disgrace. In Sourdis' defence, thirteen of his captains signed a declaration on his behalf. Indeed, the argument has been advanced by modern historians that Sourdis did a remarkable job engaging the larger Spanish force for as long as he did.[106] But from Richelieu's perspective, he lost all confidence in his former commander and creature, labelling him "treacherous, wicked, incapable, envious and backbiting, a braggart of little heart and less fidelity." He was in no mood for half measures or excuses, for as he said to Sourdis, "The greatest displeasure that I can suffer is when they whom I recommend to the King do not succeed in pleasing him."[107]

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[104] "Lettre de M. le Prince à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, pour se réjouir de sa victoire et lui envoyer quelques poudres. De Pézénas, ce 11 juillet 1641," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:646; "Lettre de M. le Prince à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux. De Leucate, ce 9 août 1641," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:670; "Lettre de M. le Prince à M. l'archevêque de Bordeaux, touchant les vivres entrés à Collioure. Narbonne, ce 22 mai 1641," Sue, Correspondance de Sourdis, 2:600.

[105] "A Monsieur Monsieur le Prince. 4 août [1641]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:849.

By May 1642 all French forces, including a number of newly purchased or borrowed ships, had been gathered in the Mediterranean in preparation for the next campaigning season. Under Maillé-Brézé's command, the fleet prepared to intercept the northbound Spanish fleet that had just left Tarragona. Off Barcelona, the two forces battled from 30 June to 2 July. Although he won no significant victory, Maillé-Brézé had kept the Spaniards from reinforcing Roussillon. La Mothe-Houdancourt's attention now fell to Rosas. On 13 April La Meilleraye and Schomberg took Collioure.

Although this was significant and the subsequent acquisition of Roussillon to France was a tremendous legacy of Richelieu's remarkable naval revival, his navy still was beset with organizational problems in his last year of life.[108] From his perspective, it failed to achieve its fullest potential, for in the war with Spain Richelieu's efforts had not been entirely vindicated with glorious achievements for which he could claim responsibility.

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[106] La Roncière, Marine française, 85; Chabaud-Arnault, "Les flottes de Louis XIII," 390-401.

[107] Quoted by Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 868, n.1.

[108] "A M. de Noyers. De Narbonne, ce 17e may 1642," and "A M. de Noyers. De Narbonne, ce 18e may 1642," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:917, 919. etat de la marine?

Although he left the Grand-Mastership to Maillé-Brézé after his death in December 1642, he was not confident that glorious events lay ahead. In May he ordered Des Noyers, in consultation with La Mothe-Houdancourt, to give orders to Brézé to ensure that the navy "is not left useless."[109] Indeed, without Richelieu the navy soon fell into the disorder and ineffectiveness that plagued it before 1624. Yet this is not surprising for it had never been more than a personal project of his with rather limited immediate aims.

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[109] "A M. de Noyers. De Narbonne, ce 13e may 1642," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:916.

CONCLUSION

Richelieu is not remembered primarily for an outstanding naval career. Perhaps the various disappointments in the course of war with Spain kept him from enjoying such a legacy. Yet throughout his career, Richelieu used the marine as a tool in the consolidation of his authority. In the process, he achieved a great deal; from practically nothing, he defined a workable maritime authority, built an impressive naval force and pursued important victories against England, La Rochelle and Spain. At the same time, his commercial and diplomatic motives changed according to the changing opportunity to win the King's trust and to build his own power. This was his only consistent pursuit.

It is certainly true that in 1624 the French marine was disorganized and really of no use to the Crown, whereas in Spain (where the need for a strong navy was traditionally understood), a general revival was under way with Olivares' direction. The Dutch and the English also presented military and commercial challenges to the French. But Richelieu's initial efforts were concerned exclusively with the political advantage he could win by appearing to respond to these international challenges and to internal pleas for commercial revitalization and protection.

Although it is irresponsible to ignore entirely Richelieu's reflections on economics (as Hill's translation of the *Testament politique* encourages), it is simply to misdirect energy to consider and criticize his career on the basis of commercial reform alone (as Hauser and Boiteux have done with widely differing conclusions). Commercial or colonial questions were, at most, ancillary concerns, borrowed from a few economic theorists, whom Richelieu was able to manipulate to his advantage. Like most of his contemporaries, he did not consider, or understand, the full implications of commercial growth or colonization. His concerns for finance, apart from adding to his own wealth, were restricted to raising enough money in order to pursue quickly grander designs.

Richard Bonney asserts that fiscal policy had a great deal to do with Richelieu's early programme for reform, but he suggests that "the application of reform was to be tempered by his other political objectives and the opportunities presented by the foreign and domestic situation."[1] This does not go nearly far enough, for Richelieu's political objectives and the opportunities open to him always defined his programme. His concern with consolidating his position brought him into conflict with powerful figures who held maritime interests; it was this political competition that prompted his passion for maritime affairs and his efforts to tie his ambition to the pursuit of dramatic international conflict. Thus, through successive commercial edicts in 1626 Richelieu redefined the maritime authority of the various titles of Admiralty that he was wresting concurrently from Montmorency.

Assessments of Richelieu's early career focus either on his desire for reform or his concern with the Huguenots. But from October 1626 his attention was fixed squarely upon the newly perceived threat from England.[2] By appearing to challenge it successfully in his capacity as the Superintendent of Commerce, Richelieu hoped to confirm and practically validate his military authority. In this context, the famous siege of La Rochelle must not be considered an expression of his singular desire, from his first moments in power, to break the Huguenots but as a necessary concession to the concerns of the King after the failure of Richelieu's navy to counter dramatically the English invasion of Ré. The dike and the siege, from Richelieu's perspective (not that of the King) was a desperate but relatively successful attempt to salvage political position through a victory with the navy that Louis had entrusted to him.

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[1] Bonney, King's Debts, 131-132.

[2] Gabriel Hanotaux, Maximes d'état et fragments politiques du cardinal de Richelieu (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1880; reprint, Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms International, 1979), 8.

Immediately Richelieu's attention turned to the Hapsburg threat which offered further redress and a dramatic opportunity for glory. The struggle with Spain was not merely an unfortunate distraction from a greater concern with reform, as many have suggested.[3] Rather, Richelieu consciously continued to acquire and redefine the authority necessary to be in a position to benefit from the conflict. In other words, the re-organization of the marine was not undertaken for the future commercial benefit of the realm nor was it hurried or weakened by external pressures. These external pressures were exploited by Richelieu in his effort to consolidate his position.

Richelieu had no concern with genuinely reformist measures such as the Code Michaud, or at the very least his political concerns were far greater. This involved no paradox for Richelieu. He did not want to allow anyone, especially his *dévots* enemies, from whom he hoped to dissociate himself in favour of a close alliance with the King, to innovate or define in any way the maritime charge that he was constantly invigorating. In contrast to the

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[3] Tapié, France in the Age of Louis XIII; La Roncière, Marine française; Burckhardt, Richelieu; Taillemite, Histoire ignorée; Boiteux, Grand-Maître.

Code, he commissioned Infreville and Seguiran with practical projects: to survey the coast, establish his authority and physically prepare the state for conflict.

Pagès writes that Richelieu was unable to enforce the reforms of the Code Michaud because he was a great statesman but poor reformer and administrator and, therefore, war left his economic programme fruitless.[4] Yet this denies his actual successes and his consistency in manipulating economic rhetoric to pursue a military position from which he could gain tremendously, and this implies typically that he was more than the personal minister to the King concerned chiefly with his own political life.

Shortly after the Day of the Dupes (1630), in which Richelieu (and his policy of aggression against Spanish interests) won the King's confidence over the *dévots* and the Queen Mother's influence, the Cardinal emphasized the inextricable connection between the King's growing authority on the one hand and Richelieu's protection and freedom to pursue his designs on the other, a connection that he hoped to make even stronger:

> If [His Majesty] wants to maintain his authority, he must have one eye open perpetually and lose no time doing whatever is necessary, otherwise it will surely be lost. This matter is like a great sickness that one remedy cannot cure and which cannot be nursed but by strong remedies, applied often.[5]

Of course, he hoped that Louis would give him all the freedom necessary to wield the strongest instrument of royal authority available: the military navy that he had invigorated. Thus, just as he had consolidated his authority on the west coast in order to direct the response to the English challenge, so did he consolidate his authority in the Mediterranean in order to direct the war with Spain.

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[4] Pagès, La monarchie d'ancien régime, 87, 105.

[5] "Avis proposé au Roy, après qu'il eut commandé au cardinal de demeurer auprès de luy, nonobstant la disgrace de la Reyne Mère. [.....décembre (?) 1630]," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 4:63-64.

In this war, the greatest of all opportunities, Richelieu expected to be able to attend to the many other distractions and entrust his authority to political allies and thereby reap the benefit of his work. Unfortunately for him, Louis took him at his word and exercised his invigorated authority by choosing the command in 1636 against Richelieu's wishes. In this way, Richelieu was in competition with the King for glory, leading to much confusion.

Typically, Richelieu placed trusted officers at all levels of command in a hierarchy that was inefficient, overlapping and self-policing but was entirely accountable to him. In this way, he hoped to manipulate the fleet to reflect well on him. In the event of disappointment he could pass the blame, but his reliance on individual diligence for the success was a source of frustration. "All the misery in the affairs of the King come from a lack of capable servants."[6] Of course in war tactical concerns were important, but equal to his concern for Genoa or the Lérins was his concern for the reputation of the Grand-Master with his hopes riding on Sourdis in particular.

With Sourdis' failures in the Mediterranean in 1636-1637, the final opportunity to exploit fully his work was presented by the siege of Fuenterrabia of 1638 and the anticipated victories that would follow. No existing treatment of the French navy is sensitive to the singular importance of this siege to the development of the French navy in the early part of the century, for no other account properly considers its inextricable connection with Richelieu's politics. The victories at Oristano, off Genoa, and at Guetaria are not nearly as important as most modern surveys of the period inadvertently suggest nor as significant as Richelieu hoped retrospectively to assert. After this disappointment, Richelieu never again was as enthusiastic about the opportunities presented by his navy. He hoped only to avoid glaring incompetence on the part of his creatures, and even in this he was disappointed.

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[6] "Pour M. de Chavigny. De Han, ce 31 aoust 1638," Avenel, Lettres de Richelieu, 6:130.

A proper understanding of Richelieu's entire maritime career requires a renunciation of the legacy inherited from the Cardinal and his *Testament politique*. He was not a man of great vision dedicated exclusively to his clearly defined programme for the invigoration of the Crown's strength. Equally, it is artificial to consider, in isolation, the reforms that he espoused early in his career, the administrative changes and naval infrastructure that he initiated or the later military campaigns under his direction. He was neither a reformer, administrator nor statesman of exceptional foresight. Rather, all of his initiatives were part of a consistently pursued personal political ambition which included an improvised programme to invigorate the marine and exercise its military potential in the name of the King.

What survived Richelieu in terms of commercial invigoration or naval infrastructure is, therefore, incidental to a proper assessment of his career. Moreover, despite any perceived failures (and his own disappointment at the final results of his maritime career) he manipulated relentlessly and brilliantly the opportunities that the marine, and naval war, offered him. In so doing he defined an unprecedented maritime authority in France and consolidated his position with respect to Louis XIII, making him one of the most powerful subjects ever of a King of France.

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GLOSSARY OF NAMES

Angoulême, Charles de Valois, duc d'. A royal cousin of Louis XIII and political ally of La Vieuville, commander of the land forces at La Rochelle in 1627 before the arrival of Louis himself.

Beauveau, Gabriel de, évêque de Nantes. A member of Richelieu's household, made Bishop of Richelieu's governorship of Nantes in 1635, named to the Council of Admiralty and given special commission to prepare the Provençal coast for war, in 1636.

Buckingham, Charles Villiers, Duke of. English Duke and favourite of King Charles I, scandalized French Court during negotiations for alliance against Spain with overtures to Queen Anne of Austria. Later, led naval invasion of Ré in 1627.

Castellane, Jean-Louis du Mas de, baron d'Allemagne. Commander of the Levant squadron in 1636, mortal enemy of the bailli de Forbin (commander of the galleys in 1640) for the deadly duel between their parents.

Condé, Louis II de Bourbon, duc d'Engien, prince de. Or simply, "Monsieur le Prince," led forces against Huguenot rebels in Languedoc, and in 1638 led forces in Guyenne, laid siege to Fuenterrabia that ended in failure. In 1641 directed forces in Roussilion.

Épernon, Jean-Louis de Nogaret de La Valette, duc d'. Powerful and independent Duke, governor of Guyenne. Longstanding enemy of Richelieu, implicated in the Chalais Conspiracy of 1626.

Forbin, bailli de. Enemy to the baron d'Allemagne. The lieutenant (and adversary) to the General of the Galleys in 1636 Du Pont-Courlay, subsequently given command in 1640.

Gouttes, Phillipe des, commandeur. Trusted captain upon whom Richelieu relied for his practical experience. Commanded the Breton squadron in 1636.

Guise, Charles de Lorraine, duc de. Governor of Provence and Admiral of the Levant, commanded royal naval forces against La Rochelle in 1622 and 1626, and against Genoa in 1625. Tenaciously resisted encroachments on his maritime privileges. Implicated in popular rebellion against the Crown and exiled in 1632.

Harcourt, Henri de Lorraine-Elbeuf, comte de. Or "Cadet la Perle" after his ornate ear-ring. Commanded combined Atlantic-Mediterranean naval forces in 1636. Led the recapture of the Lerins islands in 1637.

Henriette-Marie. Sister to Louis XIII, married to King Charles I of England on 11 May 1625.

Infreville, Louis Le Roux, sieur d'. Special commissioner assigned to the task of enforcing Richelieu's authority and assessing the military capacity of the Atlantic seaboard of France in 1629.

La Mothe-Houdancourt, maréchal de. Commanded land forces in support of rebels of Catalonia in 1640, directed the siege of Tarragone in 1641.

La Porte, Amador, commandeur de. Maternal uncle to Richelieu, trusted naval commander from the Order of the Knights of Malta.

La Vieuville, Charles Coskaer, marquis de. Ambitious senior minister to the King in 1624, first political target of Richelieu, disgraced within months of the Cardinal's nomination to the Council.

Maille-Brézé, Armand de, duc de. Nephew to Richelieu, given command of the galleys in 1639 and of the Atlantic fleet in 1640. Succeeded Richelieu as Grand-Master of naval affairs in 1642.

Marie de Medici. Queen Mother and powerful political figure among the ultra-Catholic *dévots* at Court. Provided protection and patronage for Richelieu until challenging his growing influence with the King on the Day of the Dupes (11 November 1630) marking her political demise and exile.

Marillac, Michel de. Keeper of the Seals and powerful *dévot*. Composed the administrative reforms of the Code Michaud in 1629. Opposed the policy of aggression against Spain, principal adversary to Richelieu prior to the Day of the Dupes.

Montmorency, Henri II, duc de. Admiral of France, Brittany and Guyenne until 1626. Governor of Languedoc, led uprising against the Crown and, with Richelieu's encouragement, executed in 1632.

Noyer de Saint-Martin, François du. Councillor to Louis XIII, prior to 1626 proposed many elaborate maritime reforms to be echoed later in Richelieu's programme.

Olivares, Gaspar de Guzman, Count-Duke of. Principal minister and advisor to King Philip IV of Spain. Adversary to Richelieu, oversaw naval re-invigoration and pursued anti-French policies and open war.

Orléans, Gaston, duc de. Or simply, "Monsieur," brother to Louis and heir presumptive until the birth of the *dauphin* in 1638. Focus of the Chalais Conspiracy of 1626 and continued political danger to Richelieu.

Pont-Courlay, François de Vignerot, marquis de. Feckless nephew to Richelieu, named General of the Galleys in 1635, led dramatic victory in battle against Spanish galleys off Genoa in 1638, replaced by Maillé-Brézé in 1639.

Parma, Duke of. Ally of France by the treaty of Rivoli 1635. Switched allegiance and allied with Spain in February 1637 after continued disappointment with French promises of aid.

Razilly, Isaac de. Experienced captain whom Richelieu trusted. Proposed many changes to the marine which Richelieu adopted as his own.

Rohan, Henri, duc de. Huguenot *chef de parti*, led rebellions against the Crown in Languedoc ended by the Treaty of Grace, at Alès, in 1629.

Schomberg, Henri, comte de, maréchal de. A councillor to the King whom Richelieu came to trust. Led the French forces on the island of Ré that forced the English retreat in 1627. Led forces into Roussillon in 1640 until being recalled and replaced by Condé in 1641.

Séguiran, Henri de. A special commissioner from the Parlement of Provence assigned to the task of enforcing Richelieu's maritime privileges and assessing the military capacity of the southern coast of France in 1633.

Soubise, Benjamin de Rohan, duc de. Younger brother of Huguenot leader, Rohan, led surprise naval attack on harboured vessels at Blavet in 1625 and encouraged the rebellion of La Rochelle in 1627.

Sourdis, Henri d'Escoubleau de, archévêque de Bordeaux. Political adversary to Épernon, distinguished at La Rochelle in 1627-1628. Richelieu's most trusted naval officer. Chosen to ensure the success of the marine in 1636, given formal command of the combined Atlantic-Mediterranean fleet in 1638, but failed to capture Fuenterrabia. Exiled in disgrace to Carpentras in 1641 after also failing to take Tarragona.

Sublet des Noyers, François. Secretary for War and ally to Richelieu, behind the movement to discredit Sourdis in 1641.

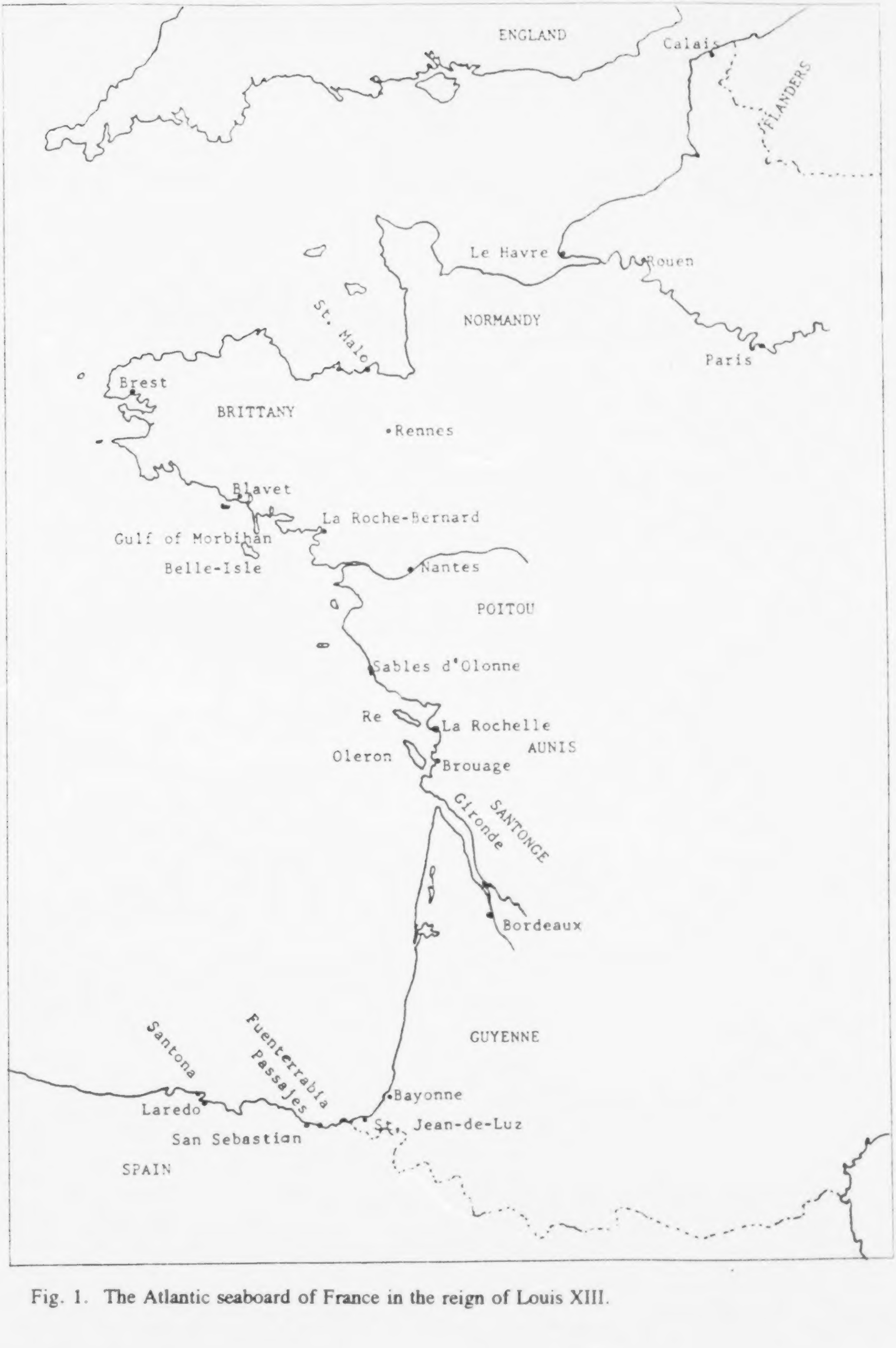
Thémines, Pons de Lauzières, marquis de, maréchal de. Richelieu's choice in 1626 as replacement of Vendôme as governor of Brittany--a difficult choice as Richelieu's brother had been killed by the Marshal's son. Died the next year in 1627.

Toiras, Jean du Caylar de St. Bonnet, maréchal de. Governor of La Rochelle, Aunis and the island of Ré until 1630 when they became the property of the Cardinal. Bravely resisted the English siege of St. Martin on Ré in 1627. Defended the French-held Casale from 1629.

Valençay, Achille, commandeur de. Uncle to the comte de Chalais, revealed the 1626 plot to Richelieu. Later, commanded the royal naval forces during the 1628 siege of La Rochelle.

Vendôme, César de Bourbon, duc de. Half-brother to the King, governor of Brittany (through which he claimed the Admiralty of Brittany). Entertained ambitions with respect to maritime possessions until his arrest in 1626 for his part in the Chalais Conspiracy.

Vitry, Nicolas de l'Hospital, marquis de, maréchal de. Named governor of Provence after Guise's ouster in 1631. Complicated matters in 1636 by insisting on the directorship of military affairs.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Belle-Isle
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Sables d'Olonne
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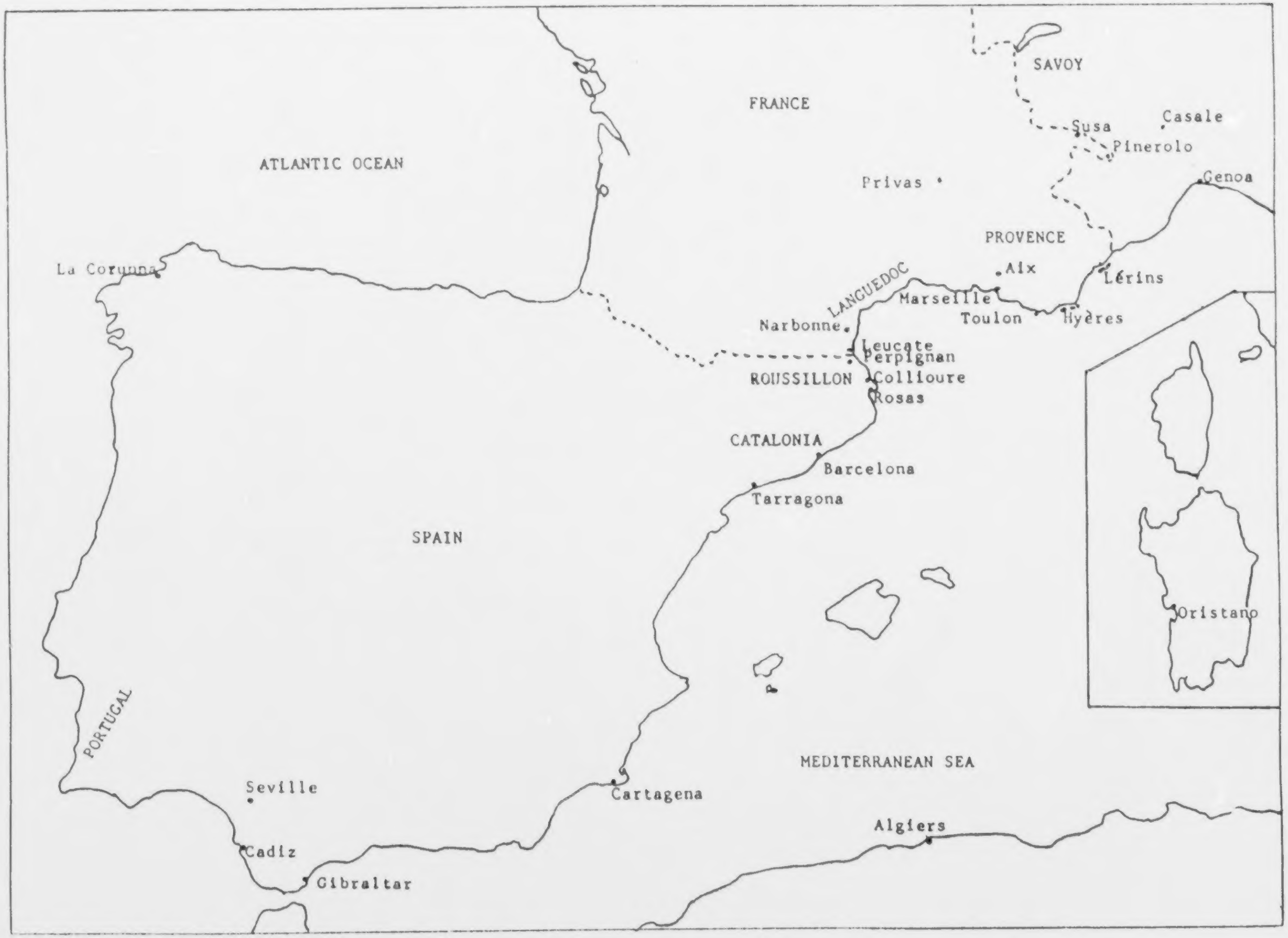
Fig. 1. The Atlantic seaboard of France in the reign of Louis XIII.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Marseille
Toulon
Hyères
Narbonne
Leucate
Perpignan
ROUSSILLON
Collioure
Rosas
CATALONIA
Barcelona
Tarragona
SPAIN
Oristano
PORTUGAL
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
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Cartagena
Algiers
Cadiz
Gibraltar

Fig. 2. Spain and the Mediterranean seaboard of France in the reign of Louis XIII.